

~~To nose J. G.~~

CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILOMATHLEAN HALL, 25th September, 1839.

M^r. JAMES C. CROSS:

SIR,—The undersigned have been appointed a committee, on behalf of the Philomathlean Society, to tender you their grateful and heartfelt acknowledgments for the very able, eloquent, and instructive Address just delivered, by yourself, in their hearing; and to request a copy of the same for publication.

The open, candid and independent manner in which you delivered your sentiments and opinions in regard to a subject fraught with so much interest to the American People; the deep solicitude you feel in the improvement and elevation of the Literature of our Republic, warrants us in the assertion, that your Address will meet with a most cordial reception from the free, liberal and enlightened portion of our citizens.

Accept, sir, the well wishes of the Society we have the honor to represent, for your welfare and prosperity in future life; and permit us to subscribe ourselves,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant's,

WM. K. EDWARDS,

LINZY SEALS,

JOHN W. DUNBAR.

BLOOMINGTON, SEPT. 26th, 1839.

GENTLEMEN:—The terms in which you allude to the Address which, on last evening, I had the honor to deliver before the Philomathlean Society are highly flattering; and in granting the request which you, in behalf of that body, are pleased to make, I cannot refrain from expressing the gratification which the fact that the sentiments to which I gave utterance met in some degree with your approbation, affords me.

Inasmuch as the strictures which I made on the state of American society are sometimes severe, and may appear to partake of the spirit that pervades books of British travel, it may not be improper for me to remark that I neither approve of the conduct of their authors, nor of the motives that prompted to it. While I have given expression to what I conceive to be truths, in a language too plain, perhaps, to be generally pleasing, my object was to turn public attention, if possible, to the disadvantages under which our literature labors, in the hope that such measures would

be gradually adopted as are calculated to place it ultimately on a better footing. In performing this duty, my sense of the importance of a high literature was such that I have given vent to my feelings when, perhaps, I should have been content to state facts. This, together with the unpopularity of some of the opinions I have ventured to defend, will cause the address to be condemned by those, at least, who cannot bear to hear their imperfections alluded to. At this, however, I shall not complain, if the perusal of it, which I now surrender into your hands, shall have the effect to awaken those to a sense of their duty, who are qualified to vindicate the claims of literature. I should be unworthy the cause which I have attempted, though feebly, to defend, of the country that gave me birth, and of the honor of having addressed the Philomathean Society, were I to shrink from the publication of any opinion or sentiment which I consider true, merely because it may happen to be unpopular, and may, consequently, for a time, subject me to the animosity of rancorous opposition.

Yours, very truly,

JAMES C. CROSS.

Messrs. EDWARDS, SEALS, and DUNBAR.

A D D R E S S.

WERE we to be guided by the results of experience in other places, in regard to the measures which most certainly conciliate prejudice and inspire a generous partiality, we should attempt to win your favor by an unrestrained indulgence in the turgid effusions of adulatory admiration, and by raising sacrificial whisperings in your ears. We trust, however, that, to-day, we are blessed with the singular privilege of addressing an audience, so free from uneducated prejudice,—so liberal and enlightened in opinion, and so wise in the judgment it has formed of the value to truth of free and independent discussion, that it will be enabled to listen, with patience if not interest, to the strictures, sometimes severe, but believed to be always just, which we may make on the present state and future prospects of AMERICAN LITERATURE. This theme has not been selected from a belief of the peculiar applicability of its discussion to the circumstances of those whom we expected to meet at this time and in this place. Entirely unacquainted, by personal observation, with the character of this community, and having been honored with an invitation from the Philomathcean Society, to address it, although unknown until to-day, to every one of its members, I should be doing violence to my sense of justice, as well as wanting in gratitude to those who, I fear, more from a

spirit of benevolent encouragement than from the sober dictates of wisdom, have selected me to minister on this interesting occasion, were I not emphatically to declare that the sentiments to which I may give utterance are not designed to be cast, as a reproach, on the intellectual and literary character of the enterprising and public spirited State of Indiana.

As a nation we have been too much in the habit of looking exclusively at, and being dazzled with wonder by, the bright side of all that concerns us. In order to judge of any thing with accuracy, it is necessary that we should view it under all its phases, and examine it under every possible variation of aspect. We have taken too much pains to cheat ourselves into the belief that we are, in almost every respect, superior to any other people, however august or ancient. There are some points, it is true, in regard to which we are unrivalled, while it is equally true that there are others, in regard to which, we have been greatly surpassed. In other words, there are defects in our character, which have not been sufficiently signalized and commented on. They should, however, be made known. No excuse can be given for their concealment.

The first step towards the correction of errors and the reformation of vices, is to obtain the conviction of their existence. But he who assumes the responsibility of exposing the absurdity of the former, or of pointing out the atrocity of the latter, is generally condemned as a foe, when sound policy and strict justice would regard him as a friend. Never, at the most eventful period of our history, had the intellectual, the refined, or the influential such arduous duties to perform, such heavy and solemn pledges to redeem, as at the present moment. Under a deep sense, therefore, of the obligations which he owes his country, suffer a humble and an unimportant individual to forego the satisfaction which would arise from the selection of topics of praise and admiration, while he attempts to discharge what he considers

sacred duty. He, who would maintain the dignity of the human character and preserve untarnished the lustre of his country's glory, would not select an occasion like that on which we are to-day assembled, for time-wooing or time-serving—for flattery or falsehood—for cozening or lying. All such are invoked by their patriotic admiration of our republican institutions,—by their strong desire to see their prosperity promoted and guaranteed, and by their zealous ambition to have them crowned with unfading laurels of perpetual renown, to speak, frankly and freely, the plain uncourtly truth. The loose and debauched state of morals; the soft effeminacy of manners; the degraded condition of the press, and the stupid indifference, if not blindness, of the public, to the surrounding current of folly and distraction, not only imperiously demand it, but conjure and implore all those, whose teaching would instruct, or example edify, to save the nation from that deep and unfathomable void in which intellect is to be confounded and happiness forever lost.

Our country is remarkable in all that forms its elementary character, and extraordinary in the sources of brilliancy which must, if properly awakened into exertion, gild with the streaming splendors of future glory, a magnificent superstructure. From the day of its discovery up to the present moment, its annals have been the record of events singular in all that excites curiosity; important, in all that inspires interest; beautiful, in all that fascinates; wonderful, in all that is stupendous in unexpected achievement, and unprecedented, in all that has defied or distanced calculation. The knowledge of its existence sprung from the deep forecast of taunted and calumniated science; its people issued from the bloody loins of a bigotted persecution; its interests were nursed in the arms of oppression; its hopes were, for a time, blighted by the tainting breath of brutal intolerance and unendurable exaction; and it has reached mature and vigorous manhood, in the midst of

toils the most laborious ; difficulties the most discouraging, and dangers the most appalling.

The unexpected rise of this republic ; the rapidity of its unprecedented march to its present dignity and grandeur ; the sudden impulse which it gave to the tide of emigration from every corner of Europe, and which is still flowing in undiminished volume into the remotest forests of the American domain ; the extraordinary extension of its territory, both by purchase and conquest ; the brilliant trophies which have marked with triumph our contests both by sea and land, and which brought to an honorable, if not to a glorious, termination a war with the most experienced and powerful nation of Europe ; the establishment of a government which has liberalized its own people and enlightened those of other countries, and the diffusion of happiness on a scale so comprehensive as to be wholly unexampled in the annals of the world are so many features in the history of this republic, which prove to us that it has been under the special direction of Divine Providence, and that it is designed, under the auspices of wisdom and virtue, to be a great example to mankind.

Although there is so much of which we may justly boast, and of which the American citizen should never cease to be proud, it is necessary, in this brief and hasty survey of the blessings which a kind Providence has bestowed upon us, and which give us an unchallenged pre-eminence amongst the nations of the earth, not to forget, that we enjoy, and that we have pushed to the farthest verge of propriety the liberty of the press—the privilege of reprobating the arrogant insolence of power,—the right of exposing to all the furies of republican vengeance malversation in office, and the unallievable prerogative of denouncing in terms of unmitigated rancor and animosity treacherous usurpations of authority. This is a boon, which should fasten on the affections of the patriot, and he should guard it, with the greatest vigilance, against the secret encroachments of fraud and

defend it, with invincible firmness, against the open assaults of violence. By the liberty, however, we do not mean the licentiousness of the press. The one, like Plato's guardian angels, continually showers down blessings, while the other, like the God of Epicurus, as zealously pours down storms and tempests. The one is the terror of tyrants and the safeguard of free institutions, while the other is a pen dipped in the fiery lava of a volcano, that withers, violates and destroys. "Wherever the freedom of the press exists," says a celebrated writer, "I must assent that literature, well or ill conducted, is the great engine by which I am persuaded all civilized states must ultimately be supported or overthrown."

Is this true? The lessons of experience, and the voice of wisdom concur in vindicating its claims to universal credibility. Public opinion, which is generally but little more than the opinion of the public press, exerts even an influence over the most despotic forms of government, and, in a republic, rules with an almost omnipotent sway. What a subject, then, of solemn reflection does the state of literature present! How anxiously solicitous should we be to impart to it a sound and an elevated character,—to purify it of all its vain and visionary splendor,—to render it propitious to the refinement of manners,—to make it instrumental and subsidiary to the elegancies of life, and to stamp it with the ennobling attributes of virtue and self-approbation. Then, would it alleviate, refine and embellish the intercourse of social life; eloquence would then throw around it its most attractive brilliancy; history would then invest with the most seducing splendor the truths of demonstration, and cast a pleasing charm over the plausibilities of ingenious speculation, and poetry would then array it in all the graces of the most tempting solicitation.

In every government, literature should be an object of peculiar care and attention, but in a republic, where the

noblest features of the human character are oftenest displayed, and the sublimest energies of the human soul oftenest called forth, it should be cherished, admired, and cultivated. Intellect, knowledge, and virtue alone can warm it into life, and give energy and effect to its institutions. Under their guiding and restraining auspices prosperity is adequately guaranteed, but without them, ruin, complete and overwhelming is sure, ultimately, to overtake it. When, therefore, we reflect how obviously the destinies of mankind are dependant, in a great degree, upon the experiment, as it is called, now in the progress of trial, wisdom, intelligence and patriotism should unite in pushing it forward to successful consummation. It is in the power of most other nations to look back through a long and checkered history for landmarks and beacons to guide them through the difficulties by which threatened disaster may surround them. We, however, are peculiarly unfortunate in this respect. We have no voluminous annals to which reference can be made for the lessons of experience, or for the precedents of the past to direct our uncertain footsteps through the dangers of the unexplored future. We are but of yesterday, with no authority to justify—no experience to sanction,—no precedent to encourage or embolden, but are thrown entirely on our intelligence and sagacity to choose, amidst a crowd of plausible and imposing, but new and untried expedients. Philosophers and statesmen may search in vain, in the records of history, for the model of the government under which we live, and have hitherto prospered. Our future success must consequently depend upon the wisdom with which we conceive, and the promptness with which we execute. The principles on which we act must be deduced by reason, guided by the beacons of experience, and invigorated by a knowledge of the past, from the circumstances in which we are placed. Intelligence and virtue are, in ordinary times, necessary to our progressive improvement, but in circumstances of difficulty and danger they

are absolutely indispensable. There have been periods of deeper gloom, times of more serious disaster, and seasons of heavier misfortune, but the annals of the world furnish no record of any age so pregnant with all that concerns man's future and final destiny.

Superiority in literature is that excellence which casts the light of a more seducing and enduring brilliancy around the glory of a country than can be derived from any other source whatever. Victories, though numerous and brilliant, evince nothing more than the strength to conquer, and the power to oppress, while they as often betray the blindness of passion, and the heated zeal of implacable animosity, as they do the forecast of wisdom, or the generosity of relenting hostility. Political revolutions usually exhibit nothing more than a monstrous union of turpitude and treachery, and a hideous imbroglio of cruelty, corruption and sanguinary violence. But a nation's literature, embodying the noblest triumphs of the human understanding, sheds upon a country a bright and an inextinguishable lustre. Unstained by blood, undefamed by violence, unsullied by vice, and undisgraced by crime it gives us the exact lineaments of the age in which it flourished, and reflects the living image of those who, remote from the noise and hurry of tumultuous life, worshipped, with a singleness of heart, and a guiltless purity of purpose, at its hallowed shrine. For the interests, therefore, of those who expend their lives in the cause of letters, a liberal and enlightened public will always feel a tender and sympathising concern. "He who gives glory to his own country," says an English orator, Mr. Wyndham, "gives it that which is far more valuable than any acquisition whatever. Glory alone is not to be taken away by time or accident. It is that fine extract, that pure essence which endures to all ages, while the grosser parts, the residuum, may pass away and be forgotten!"

We cannot, therefore, hold in too sacred remembrance the names of those who have advanced our literature,

or regard with a too holy reverence those who are expending their lives in the cause of human improvement and human happiness. To treat them with neglect ; to despise or oppress them is treason, not only against the interests of earth, but against the throne of heaven itself. The memory of the illustrious dead is the fairest and richest heritage a country can receive. All other glory is delusive and perishable. Unless recorded in the volumes of literature, the bloodstained laurels of military achievement are obliterated and forgotten ; the painted canvass fades and grows dim ; the chisselled marble moulders and crumbles into dust ; the shattered and glittering fragments of empire decay and are lost ; the pride of power, the arrogance of supremacy, the soarings of ambition are prostrated to the earth by successive centuries of barbarism, and no token now remains to tell the historian the story of their dignity and of their desolation.

What are the intelligible memorials of the rise, progress, decline and final overthrow of those vast empires which every thing around us prove once overshadowed and convulsed this continent ? Gigantic ruins which demonstrate that here once flourished arts and arms, perhaps long before the dawn of civilization in Europe ; relics of a remote antiquity, which tell us that centuries of industry, energy and enterprise; of national valor, sacrifice and supremacy; of national pride, exaction and oppression have revolved in vain, which the written page would have rescued from the fathomless gulph of oblivion, and have rendered subsidiary to the progress of mankind in improvement. Countless ages of ignorance, superstition and savage barbarism have rolled over, perhaps the most interesting regions of the earth, which live only in the mutilated marble scattered around the grave where the dead glory of the people must forever slumber. Had they, however, cultivated letters with the zeal with which they evidently prosecuted the arts and studied arms, the glory of their achievements would

have been undiminished by the progress of time, and we should not now be left to conjecture the strength and dignity of these nations, which have been consigned to the regions of never-ending forgetfulness. From the infirmities of age they might have gone down silently to the tomb, or, from the fierce impetuosity of savage incursion, they might have been broken in pieces, and their shattered fragments rolled over and ground to dust by the rude hand of barbaric violence, but literature would have rescued their fame from oblivion, and have borne it triumphantly above the raging storm which was hurrying all else far into the ocean of irredeemable destruction.

What was it that caused Greece and Rome, like stars shining through lowering clouds, to beam with such gorgeous brilliancy, from amidst the darkness of surrounding nations? What was it that gave them not only the brightest names in the ranks of intellectual superiority, but which, by the matchless fame of their arms, raised them to the topmost pinnacle of power? Every reader of history will at once respond that it was their devotion to, and success in, the cultivation of letters that placed on their brow the wreath of unrivalled merit, and secured to them the enthusiastic homage of all posterity. Never have any people so assiduously studied those means which powerfully encourage the lofty aspirations of genius, and call out the sublime efforts of the human mind. Even kings, consuls and conquerors, around whom the hostile glories of the battle field had cast the glare of a most imposing grandeur, envied the honors, the classical orations conferred by an enraptured people on the efforts of triumphant genius. The respect which they paid to the strength and dignity of intellect singled out both Greece and Rome as illustrious above all that was great in ancient, and equal to all that is glorious in modern times, and caused their progress in the arts and their achievements in arms to shine eternally on the record of deathless fame. The influence of poetical literature on the

social habits and political opinions of antiquity, cannot be, perhaps, at this distance of time determined with much exactitude or precision. Enough, however, has reached us to prove that it was infinitely greater than it has ever exerted on any modern people, even in the moments of their highest literary renown, and of their brightest military splendor. It elevated and refined national sentiment, while it purified and ennobled the tenderest sensibilities of the heart; it inspired an indomitable desire to excel in all the higher walks of life, while it taught the priceless value of firm and untainted public virtue; it led the people to seek wisdom, and to admire beauties, while it enabled them to reach the highest meridian of intellectual refinement. It gave wings to ambition, energy and perseverance to enterprise, and raised to a supreme pitch of grandeur and glory the military renown of antiquity. Who does not recollect the memorable response given by Phillip to the ferocious parasite who advised him to destroy Athens? "And by whom," said he, indignantly, "shall we then be praised?" Alexander fought, overrun empires,—desolated kingdoms, deposed and created kings, that the historians, poets and musicians of Athens might exclaim, "How great is Alexander!" "O Athenians," cried he, "how dearly do I purchase your esteem!" Such reverence did poetry, towering in all the pride of uncontested excellency, command amongst the ancients, that on one occasion, when a Grecian army had surrendered, those of the prisoners, and those only, who could repeat a stanza of Euripides, shook the stern purpose of a savage tyrant and stayed the eager hand of the executioner.

Since the revival of learning, almost every nation in Europe has been signalized by a golden age, in which a high and polished literature flourished, and over men's minds held sway. Italy, Spain, France and England can each boast of a bright constellation of superior intellects, whose influence was felt not only in the ages in which they respectively lived, but will continue to be

gratefully acknowledged so long as a taste for the pleasures of the understanding shall be cultivated, and so long as learning is not lost in the fathomless depths of human degradation.

The world will testify that the original and clear-sighted intellects, that have embellished with the beautiful productions of genius and art those periods that rank highest in the annals of literature, have done more to purify and enlighten public sentiment, to smooth down the asperities of public intercourse, to refine private manners, to steady and confirm the true principles of public conduct, to fortify the domestic virtues, to strengthen the bands of national union, to render more indissoluble the ties of social interest, to establish the truths of the Christian faith, to confirm the precepts of sound philosophy, in a word, to extend the mastery of reason and intelligence to the farthest verge of civilization, and to bring out in bold relief all the splendid excellencies of the human character, than the operation of all other causes combined, and it will require such finished models of high perfection in literature as laurelled and diademed both Greece and Rome on the throne of glory, to raise us, as a people, to a high degree of intellectual excellence or literary renown. In this point of view, if we except Washington, Franklin has done more for America than any other of her sons. He has won more and brighter trophies, established a higher and more enduring fame and extorted from unanimous but reluctant Europe more pure and undefiled praise than any other man in America. Let us, therefore, admire his genius, and cherish in grateful recollection his numerous excellencies, and let him be regarded as guilty of high treason on fairest virtue, and as a traitor to his country who shall attempt to sully by detraction or dim by the imputation of crime the lustre of his name.

In a representative republic public opinion exerts the most absolute dominion over all ranks of society. No means should, therefore, be spared to impart to it a lib-

eral and an enlightened character. It owes its nature and existence to the joint agency of those who conduct the public press, and those who enjoy a vigorous and paramount influence in fashionable society. They, unless strongly imbued with the spirit of a sound and progressive literature will not be able nor will they attempt to render it moral and intelligent. Without these indispensable qualities public opinion will throw no safeguard around civil freedom, nor will it rescue private virtue from the taint of indiscriminate pollution. Where the public press is unrestrained by morality and unenlightened by literature, we shall generally find society unreclaimed from vice by religion and unredeemed from ignorance by philosophy. Amongst a people thus situated we see displayed, unrelied by a single circumstance of mitigation, all that is corrupt in the exercise of power, profane in the means of parental enjoyment, abundant in the sources of penurious misery, and refined in opulent depravity.

It is a sound literature alone that can purify the turbid stream of morals and contend successfully with the blandishments and specious allurements of vice. Its first effect is to enrich the mind with the treasures of knowledge; secondly, to enlarge the sphere of thought; and, thirdly, to increase the capacity for rational enjoyment, and just in proportion to the attainment of these ends do we see the expanding circle of morality grow wider and wider. Strengthen the intellectual powers, and you do much towards restraining the vicious inclinations of the heart. Give a taste for intellectual pleasures, and you diminish the desire for gross bodily gratifications.

Men, when instructed in the immutable principles of moral and political truth, are less susceptible of ungenerous and untrue impressions, and cherish with less tenacity vulgar and injurious prejudices. With them party spirit rages with less rancor and animosity; religious bigotry does not persecute with such infuriate zeal, nor

do the ungovernable passions sway the too excitable multitude with such vindictive and destructive violence.

By sound literature we mean deep and thorough knowledge. This will rarely fail to produce a firm and fervant attachment to liberal and enlightened institutions, whether they be social, civil or political in their character. It is the natural and the unrelenting foe of precipitate innovation and of avoidable revolution. The years of youth and the midnights of mature manhood, which are requisite to obtain even a dim and imperfect glimpse of the true principles of government, will cause those who have made the acquisition to shrink with the mingled emotions of alarm and distrust from the adoption of new and untried expedients—rash and unwarranted innovations. The past history of mankind, furnishes too many illustrations of the disadvantageous consequences that have resulted from injudiciously tampering with institutions, which the consolidated wisdom of centuries had been employed in building up, and which the eventful experience of ages had sanctioned, for the mind restrained by the principles of morality, and enlightened by the truths of science to risk the peace and prosperity of a people upon the validity of a plausible but untried speculation. Sound philosophical and political information, reconciles men to the institutions under which they live, if they are at all durable; it teaches them the hazard of rash and inconsiderate change, and enables them to regard, in a spirit of generous indulgence venial errors of judgment, and to look, with an eye of compasue, on temporary vices of the public administration, rather than attempt to correct the former or reform the latter by a resort to measures more dangerous in their tendency than the evils of which complaint is made.

But this forbearance and enlightened benevolence of disposition, is not to be expected from the imperfectly instructed, who see the faint and questionable outlines of truth through the thick mists of ignorant prejudice

and angry passion. Innovation upon the established order of things is generally the mongrel offspring of selfishness, and of confined and superficial views. The consequences of change or convulsion are not weighed by such persons, for they are wholly incapable of it. Nor do they regard the verdict which posterity may pass on their conduct. Why should they? They derive no authority from antiquity. Of its volumes of experience and lessons of wisdom they are as ignorant as they are of the grave's unfathomed mysteries. Just sufficient knowledge has been acquired to render them disaffected, and to cause them to act with headlong and unreflecting violence under the impulse of political excitement. In repelling the supposed invasion of their rights or in vindicating fancied encroachments on indefeasible privileges we would not do them the injustice to allege that they always act under the impulse of improper or indefeasible motives. They unconsciously, however, become the instruments of designing and dissembling demagogues —sans culotte statesmen, who magnify every change into a political convulsion—construe every concession into disgraceful submission—and every compromise into unconditional surrender. Who contemplate the sanguinary dangers of revolution with undisturbed composure, and who would persuade the less informed but not less excitable multitude, that every evil, however trivial and unimportant, threatens public liberty, and private happiness with irretrievable overthrow.

Knowledge is indispensable to self government. Not that which is superficial and imperfect, but that which is deep and thorough. While it is admitted that there is no royal road to its attainment, those who speak most loudly and least wisely on the subject of liberty and equality should learn that there is no democratic highway to it. It can only result from time, industry, and good natural capacity. When, therefore, it is recollect-
ed that so many years of human life are necessarily em-
ployed in obtaining a subsistence, and so many other du-

ties call off attention and consume time, to expect that the great body of society can obtain more than a very limited acquaintance with the simplest elements of knowledge, must be regarded as extremely absurd: for them to acquire clear, correct and comprehensive views of any abstract subject that does not lay directly in the way of their daily pursuits is utterly impossible. Were it otherwise it cannot be believed that they have sufficient leisure to investigate knowledge for themselves. They must receive it at second hand and upon trust. Such enlightenment, therefore, so far from constituting a suitable preparation for self-government places the subjects of it more completely in the power of those who would not scruple to make their influence subserve the attainment of the most unhallowed ends.

Even were it possible, however, to give society sufficient intellectual instruction the task of preparing man for self-government would be but half performed. To invigorate thought without chastening, elevating and directing it by reforming and purifying the heart, would be to increase dissatisfaction without augmenting in a commensurate degree the means of counteraction. Intelligence without morality increases the force of passion and diminishes the capacity to resist the allurements of vicious solicitation. It magnifies the advantages which rank and station confer, and produces a settled dislike to the toils and duties of the more humble walks of life. This necessarily augments the host of aspiring fortuneless adventurers, who would rise above the homely joys and guiltless toils of obscurity; and, in proportion as the number of them increases, will be the difficulty and danger of the enterprise. Resolved, however, on bettering their worldly condition, the heart that hesitated will no longer shrink from perfidy and ingratitude, and the hand that trembled will be no longer unwilling to perpetrate.

Nor will moral culture itself always be able to prevent the evils of that ambition which superficial know-

ledge will rarely fail to enkindle, especially when the means of its gratification are distant or inaccessible. Man is naturally depraved, and if you disgust him with his condition, he will ameliorate it, whatever may be the risk to himself, or the hazard to those with whom he may be connected or surrounded. In the hurry and bustle of excessive excitement, by which he voluntarily encompasses himself, the voice of conscience is soon silenced, and success, whatever may be the means of its attainment, brings the only music to his ear—affords the only balm to his heart.

Let me not be understood to contend that knowledge increases the natural depravity of man. No one would venture the vindication of a proposition so extravagantly absurd. There is a close alliance, an indissoluble union between an elevated and a progressive literature, and rectitude of moral principle. Where the former flourishes the latter will surely abound. The one is the natural and legitimate propagator of the other. If the former fails to produce the latter, it must itself soon cease to exist. Dark night surrounds with its hollow shades, where the substance is not followed by its shadow. Nor is it true that knowledge will increase the guilt or the misery of man. When these results follow its acquisition, as they often do, they are not to be ascribed to its depth and variety, elegance and abundance, but to its scarcity and superficiality. When this is the case there must be much shallow reflection, and but little consecutive thought; much error of judgment, and but little rectitude of moral or political principle. In such a community truth and justice will never hold sway, until their dominion over human conduct is secured by increasing the amount and popularity of knowledge. But is it possible so to instruct society as to enable it, en masse to think correctly? An affirmative response would be utterly absurd and ridiculous. Many have not an inclination to study; many more have not leisure, and a still larger number have

not the capacity to think deeply, and education cannot give it to them. What nature has made barren, instruction cannot make "blossom like the rose." Whatever efforts, therefore, may be made to instruct those three numerous classes of individuals, must end in rendering them superficial and inadequate. Look the wide world over, and you will discover that no course of policy is so unfavorable to morality, so hostile to religion, and so destructive to government as that which fills a country with superficial thinkers. They ridicule morality, because they would be considered above vulgar prejudice; they sneer at religion, because they would be thought too smart to be gulled by an idle and stale superstition, and they would overthrow government, because they cherish an ever vacillating and unmixed hatred of the personal aggrandizement of all but themselves.

Public opinion, which rules tyrannically in a republic, can assume a sound character only under the auspices of an elevated literature. The truth of this we have already vindicated, and if it be a postulate no longer open to controversy, the question may be asked, Is the general diffusion of learning favorable to high efforts of genius, or to originality of thought? Startling and paradoxical as may appear the reply which much reflection on the subject constrains me to give, I must respond in the negative. What is to be understood by the hourly enunciated phrases; "diffusion of knowledge"—"general education." To compress the results of the experience and investigation of all past generations into such a form as to make it the familiar elementary knowledge of the present, and to place it within the reach of every human being in the republic. This will certainly save those who are in the pursuit of learning much labor, but its effects appear to us, and we say so with great deference to the sentiments of those with whom we differ, to be, in every other respect, prejudicial. The goal is reached without that feverish excitement which grows out of the pursuit having been experienced, and that

glow of pleasure which arises from the acquisition of knowledge, and which constitutes the most lasting and satisfactory portion, having been felt. Exercise is as necessary to intellectual as it is to bodily developement. When, however, learning is brought to us, instead of obliging us to go after it, the slumbering passions are never called into play, nor are the smouldering energies of the soul ever kindled into a flame by ambitious fires. When knowledge is acquired without toil or difficulty, education neither strengthens the powers of reason nor invigorates the faculties of thought. It trains neither to habits of zealous industry, nor to a fondness for close and laborious investigation, but lulls into a state of lethargic indifference, which is with extreme difficulty encouraged to undertake the drudgery of protracted and perplexing research, or, indeed, to engage in the pursuit of intricate and complex trains of reasoning. If we would, however, enlarge the circle of the sciences; expand the sphere of useful knowledge; exalt the dignity of human nature, or take those large and comprehensive views of social and political organization which tend to the advancement of mankind, the intellectual faculties must be trained to habits of patient and persevering investigation, and taught to appreciate the difference between continuous and desultory thought.

When knowledge is obtained without obliging the mind to submit to that toil and to contend with those difficulties with which profound education is always purchased, a strong inclination for severe study will never be felt, and a refined taste for elevated and elegant pursuits will never be imbibed. It is much easier to learn the results to which others have arrived, than to follow them out by long and laborious analysis for ourselves; to adopt than to create; to follow than to lead into the abstract and untrodden ways of investigation; to recollect than to reason; to be dazzled by the lustre of successful genius, than to arise, in the strength and

majesty of mind, and soar into the lofty and inaccessible fields of fancy.

The nursling of diffusive education, familiar with every abridgement, finds himself, in despite of his heterogenous store of all kinds of knowledge, utterly incapable, on account of his deficiency in habits of investigation, of making any other use of it than what experience and observation had already illustrated and enforced. Should he, however, venture beyond the settled limits of experimental truth, into the boundless regions of philosophical speculation, or attempt to shine in the higher spheres of poetical imagination, where vigorous genius has bloomed and flourished, he will find himself wholly unfitted "by nights of study and laborious days," for any thing grand in conception, splendid in thought, elegant in sentiment, cogent in argument, or rich and sublime in imagery, but ineffectually toiling under the vivid blaze of a meridian sun to make daylight visible.

Should he, in some wild unreflecting pean of ambition, undertake to strike out new views in literature, or to illustrate unfamiliar principles in science, he will form a practical acquaintance with the difference between imbibing and imparting knowledge. The progress he will make in the career of innovation and discovery will be so slow in comparison to the rapidity with which he became acquainted with what his more laborious predecessors had achieved, that he will, in all probability, dispirited and disheartened, relinquish the enterprise as altogether hopeless. But should he, contrary to all expectation, persevere, he will not long remain ignorant of the fact, that, if he is resolved on the improvement of any practical science, he must abandon all idea of effecting a conquest over the many other departments of knowledge. He who desires a smattering of many, will certainly be proficient in but few, if any of the branches of human learning. Excellence is the offspring of concentrated, not divided attention. He will, moreover,

ascertain, by a very brief experience, that all that the most sanguine expectation can hope to realize will be very inconsiderable, when compared with the bright array of truths that have been already discovered; and, also, that the amount of knowledge which he will thus acquire will be exceedingly small compared with what he would, in all probability, have mastered, had he been content to learn instead of attempting to teach. Sad reflection will soon convince a mind unaccustomed and disinclined to vigorous thought and close investigation, that it will prove, in future, much more conducive to personal ease to be satisfied with adopting, instead of attempting to create; with following, instead of attempting to lead; with imitating, instead of attempting to invent or to discover. In this way the extensive diffusion of learning invariably tends to weaken the powers of thought, and to emasculate literature of its vigor and independence.

In order that literature may move forward with a steady, progressive and majestic force, it is important that the public should learn to respect and honor those who, at so many sacrifices, impart life to it and give it impulse. Indispensable as this evidently is to its successful cultivation, it will not be difficult to show that the diffusion of knowledge effectually counteracts every disposition there may be in the public mind, to single out, as objects of generous reward and unguarded admiration, those whose lives have been dedicated to its service. Not only will it render public opinion careless and indifferent to the claims of the literati, but it will cause it to be unjust, if not actually hostile to any efforts that may be made in the cause of letters. This you doubtless consider a sufficiently paradoxical assertion; a little reflection, however, will satisfy you that it is true.

A general familiarity with the standard productions of elegant literature will induce the belief that they cannot be excelled or even equalled. The moment the false

and ungenerous impression is imbibed that the proudest efforts of the present or the future must fall below the noble achievements of the past, the sneer of contempt will be thrown at every performance that ventures to brave the settled prepossessions of its judges. Works of superior merit are already very numerous, and if faithfully studied, they will consume more time than any general scholar will be able to devote to them. Instead of desiring he will, therefore, deprecate their increase. Make the public at large acquainted with all the great triumphs of intellect, and you, by that very familiarity, diminish instead of increasing respect for extraordinary mental endowment, and consequently, for the finest models of classical literature. This I assert on the principle that that which is easy of attainment, and is in the possession of all, is never highly valued. Induce all men to believe that they are literary critics, and a very limited amount of knowledge is sufficient to do this, and you will soon have all the lustres of literature blotted and erased from the records of remembrance. The arrogant egotism of the upstart coxcomb will be found sitting in final judgment upon works which ages of undivided admiration had canonized. Thus the general diffusion of knowledge will commence by preventing the increase of the noble and endearing monuments of genius, and will end by dispelling that mysterious and soul inspiring charm with which they are at present invested.

If a people that have once been liberalized and enlightened by a profound literature should cease to cultivate refined and elegant pursuits, they are sure to fall into a state of mind as hostile to elevation of sentiment, as it will prove inimical to independence of thought. Undelighted with the blaze of the most prodigious talents, they will not be guided by the precepts of the soundest philosophy; utterly incapable of a judicious admiration, they will snarl from mere wantonness, at genius towering in the zenith of unrivalled power; una-

ble to discriminate or feel the beauties of a literary performance, they will, with an air of exquisite vulgarity, sweepingly condemn it as full of faults. Like "parvenu" gentility and self assumed importance, they venture to condemn, though they distrust their ability to praise. By the former course of conduct they may, with the vulgar, gain a certain degree of credit; but, by the latter, if unjust, they will be, in the estimation of the refined, infallibly disgraced. From a people that has undergone a moral and intellectual deterioration, so deplorable and revolting, to expect a love of letters, a desire to engage in the profound speculations of philosophy, or to soar into the loftier regions of fancy, would be no less nugatory and idle, than it would be absurd and preposterous.

Do we discover any indications of this indifference to works of reason and intelligence in the present state of American society? He whose observation has not been chained by benevolent prepossession, or judgment biased by a commendable feeling of patriotic partiality, must answer in the affirmative. The standard works of original genius; of deep, comprehensive, and independent reasoning that called forth the admiration of our revolutionary ancestors, have been superseded by those of mere gaiety and amusement. Trashy novels, pregnant with flimsy, gauzy, glittering nonsense, have now usurped the places which were formerly dignified by the poetry of Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden and Pope, and the prose literature of Bacon, Addison, Taylor, Hooker, Burke, and a host of other illustrious writers who have left names in the commonwealth of letters, which time cannot tarnish, nor stupid insensibility to their merits take away.

The homage which was formerly paid to the omnipotence of truth has been, by a depraved taste, transferred to the omnipotence of fiction. Instead of works of original invention and discovery—of philosophical speculation, and of elegant and sublime poetry, we abound

in encyclopedias, abridgements of all kinds, biographies of men, who should be immortal in their progeny only, spun out to a most unendurable length, with a wire-drawing amplification, equal to that of Guicciardini himself, polemical theology, which neither reforms nor enlightens, ravings about orthodoxy, and newspaper vindictiveness and vituperation.

This unflattering sketch of the present state of literature in the United States will not be, by those acquainted with its actual condition, charged with the taint of exaggeration. Though the system of general education has not hitherto been enabled to shed the glare of knowledge into every dwelling, its well-meaning but deluded advocates have succeeded in scattering a very large amount of detached, desultory and undigested information through all ranks of society; and to this circumstance are we, in a great measure, disposed to ascribe the present degraded condition of letters, as well as the present alarming indifference, too distinctly manifested by the public, in regard to their advancement.

The efforts which have been made to bring knowledge to the door of every man, has already made of us a nation of industrious readers, but superficial and unphilosophical reasoners; they have strengthened the memory, but have enfeebled the active powers of thought; they have made us timid and fastidious as it regards trifling imperfections, while they have rendered us almost insensible to the fervid bursts of real genius; they have cooled the ardor of unguarded admiration, while they have rendered us almost incapable of any sublime or powerful efforts, they have taught a relish for the rubbish of fiction,—the noise and glare of which should captivate fools only, while they have dissipated the bold zeal of glorious enterprise; they have blasted, at least for the present, the hopes of an original national literature, while they are making of us spiritless, cold and imbecile triflers; they have made us court the plaudits of the uneducated multitude, while they have ex-

tinguished the fires of ambition on the altar of true fame; they have superinduced in us a disposition to magnify the value of extensive, without rendering us very scrupulous as to the kind of knowledge; and they have stretched to the utmost limit of their capacity the inferior, while they have caused the higher faculties of the mind, which have almost ceased to be exerted, to be underrated. Such are the effects which we believe the diffusion of knowledge has already produced, and, if we have not been guilty of exaggeration, it is perfectly manifest that it would be rash and inconsiderate to maintain that we have, or that we can expect ever to have, a dignified, and an advancing literature.

The truth is, there is no deeply rooted and pervading love of letters in the United States. Nor have we a literature which, strictly speaking, is in any respect worthy to be regarded as national. This is the more to be regretted in a country where, like that of the United States, public opinion exerts a dominion imperious and irresistible. That we have given utterance to the simple, unexaggerated and deeply mortifying truth is evinced by the indisputable fact that we have no standard of literary taste to which we can confidently appeal, and by which just criticism may estimate the merits of native talent. Should we ever be able to boast of a national literature it will grow out of the circumstances in which we may be placed, and the scenery by which we are surrounded. It will be the offspring of our social and political institutions, and, if elevated and substantial, it will be bold and independent in thought; lofty in its aim; elegant in sentiment, brilliant in diction, and rich in the playful felicities of fancy. In a word, it will be peculiar to, and characteristic of us as a people. Should such a literature fail, as it certainly would, to meet the flattering approval of the British critic, the American writer, so far from being disheartened by the clamor of interested opposition, should hail it as conclusive proof that he is not a traitor to his country, nor an

alien from the commonwealth of Israel. The nature and tendency of our institutions are different, in so many respects, from those of Great Britain, that a corresponding difference in modes of thinking and habits of acting, must necessarily arise. The points of dissimilitude being radical and fundamental, they wage a war of uncompromising hostility against the principles, according to which the government of Great Britain is administered. It would be preposterous, therefore, to expect that those literary performances which praise and defend our institutions, whatever be the beauty of their style, the grandeur and originality of their conceptions, the polish and finish of their execution, would fail to provoke much angry censure and vulgar and opprobrious denunciation. In regard, however to works of a general nature, which do not involve the description of peculiar and characterizing principles, interest and illiberality will scarcely be able to sway the judgment so far as to arouse the slumbering passions into such fierce and vindictive opposition as to cause them to be treated with intentional injustice. But, such productions, however creditable in an intellectual and scientific point of view, can have but little agency in creating a standard of taste, or in giving us a national literature. Instead of individualizing, it amalgamates and confounds us with the whole human race. But let our history, our ancestral greatness and our cotemporary renown be themes of earnest defence, proud exultation and warm eulogy, and we shall be exhibited to the world as a highly favored and a peculiar people.

The writer, however, who exhibits such striking evidence of devotion to his country, is sure to provoke the insolent contempt of the arrogant Englishman, and to cause himself to be sneered at as a "truly American author," as if there could be any credit in being any thing else. By a recent English traveller it is said; "A truly American author is one who deems it necessary, not only to show an extreme predilection and fondness for

his native country, its history, its institutions—to see the past enveloped in a mist of glory, and the future veiled in a golden dust of prophetic anticipation, but also an anxiety to invent occasions for a palpable sneer at Old England." Now, with the exception of the last clause of the extract you have just heard, which is as unfounded in fact as it is unamiable, not to say ungentlemanly in spirit, I defy the microscopic eye of criticism to detect the least fault. Surely, such a writer as Mr. Stewart feebly attempts to ridicule, cannot be obnoxious to the aversion even of an Englishman, who will think soberly and feel properly on the subject. The republican author will be fond to deating partiality of his country, but not to gross injustice or blind infatuation; he will be proud of its history, but he will not close his eyes to the guiding lights of past experience; he will cherish with filial piety its institutions, but will not consider it his duty to denounce those of every other country as base and vindictive, cruel and false; he will pay the grateful homage of enthusiastic admiration to deeds of ancestral renown, but he will not be dazzled by the false glare of imaginary glory; and he will look forward with the confidence of unwavering hope to a brilliant future, but he will not deny the possibility that all the splendor of the highest present and past prosperity may not be able to dispel the gloom of despondency and despair with which it may be overshadowed by events unforeseen and disastrous. Such are the characteristics of a truly American author! To find fault with, and to sneer at old England constitutes no part of it, while we regret to say, and it is no less true than disreputable, that maliciously to snarl at every thing American, seems to enter as an essential element into the character of a truly English traveller.

In regard to the policy of training youth to study the nature and to admire the excellencies of our institutions
ubt can possibly exist. It will keep alive and vi-

vidly burning, the flame of patriotism; and as this is most necessary in, it should be most sedulously cultivated in a Republic. This is chiefly to be accomplished by a flourishing native literature. A civilized people, without any great works in history, poetry, or the fine arts, who are in the daily habit of consulting those in which the constitution and laws of a foreign nation are themes of rapturous praise and enthusiastic admiration will be deficient in national character and national feelings if not animated by sentiments of attachment to other countries. If they are not made sensible of the excellencies of their form of government; taught to love their fellow-citizens, and to emulate the exploits of their great men, their patriotism will dwindle into a cold and sluggish sentiment of indifference, which will as certainly render them incapable of any great intellectual triumph, as it will make them feeble and irresolute defenders of their rights and liberties.

The excellence of the British constitution, and the virtues and glory of England's great men have been celebrated by some of the finest eloquence and some of the sublimest poetry that ever filled the heart with rapture or fanned the patriot passions into flame. If you would feel the magic force of true patriotic minstrelsy, read the nationalities of Cowper, of Campbell, of Scott, and the Bannock-Burn of Burns, and you will soon learn the steadfast devotion to the institutions of a country which it is certain to inspire. It throws a bewitching charm over the noble and endearing features of every form of good government, while it defies the turpitude of treason to tarnish its glory, or the force of violence to destroy its existence. Nor is this all. So potent is the influence which British literature exerts that we, from our familiarity with, and admiration of it, notwithstanding the many causes of alienation, entertain warmer feelings toward England and a stronger bias towards the English constitution than is compatible with

a proper respect for ourselves or an ardent devotion to the prosperity of our country. This, though not a matter of surprise is doubtless a subject of just and severe reproach.

In youth patriotism should be inspired and republicanism taught. Impressions made in early life are so difficult to eradicate that we often see visible traces of them in those far advanced in the decline of life. It should therefore be an object of the first importance to keep the stream of scholastic literature perfectly free of deleterious foreign influences, and to limit as much as possible the influence of such works as inculcate principles that are hostile to the moral and political interests of the government under which we live. But has this course been observed in the education of our youth? Have our young men been trained up in habits of republican feeling and acting? The response that is given must be in the negative. In most of our schools, colleges, and universities, there is such an intense admiration of British literature that when those upon whose principles the perpetuity of this government must depend, enter the tumult and bustle of active life, they are found to be better qualified to submit as British subjects than to act as American citizens. Most of the books with which they are made familiar, whether they relate to morals, religion, law, history or poetry, are the offspring of British genius, and inculcate British principles, and British motives of action. When they leave college they know much more of English history, biography and general literature, than they do of the same branches of learning as they have been cultivated in the United States. They dwell with infinite delight upon all that has shed renown on a long line of noble Anglo-Saxon ancestry, while actually ignorant of, or treat with cold and mortifying indifference of contempt those sublime achievements of our immediate forefathers which will be themes of triumphant exultation so long

as freedom shall flourish in the full radiance of its meridian splendor, and continue to swell the heart of man with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Is this not ominous of our fate? Is it not an alarming forerunner of actual hostility to institutions which obviously require, in these eventful and portentous times, all that is pure in patriotism, stern in virtue, steadfast in allegiance, elevated and national in learning, firm and unshaking in courage, to sustain and perpetuate them? Invest foreign institutions with the blandishments of superior attraction, and you debauch the patriot from his allegiance; gild the manners and customs of a strange people with a seductive brilliancy and you weaken the bonds of social union; irradiate with the charms of irresistible fascination the conquests of foreign enterprize and exertion, and you cast the mantle of unmerited oblivion over deeds that would have flattened the pride and have strengthened the patriotism of all antiquity in the brightest days of its greatness and glory.

We are politically independent of, but are still in a state of most shameful and mortifying intellectual subjection to Great Britain. Undismayed in the presence of her embattled legions, we pusillanimously quail before her censors of criticism; we refuse to throw off the yoke under which the national mind bitterly groans, and by which it has been emasculated of its strength and independence. Will the time never arrive when our youth shall no longer breathe the pestilential air of institutions which they should distrust if not despise? When will the genius of free institutions be allowed to press its own children to its bosom—be permitted to exercise the sacred and precious office of nourishing them from the clear fountains of republican patriotism; be allowed to rear them up to the stature and vigor of mature manhood, under the untainting auspices of a pure, proud, and progressive national literature? Not until the abject and cringing spirit

which leads to the imitation of that literature which has raised the “fast anchored isle” to an unrivalled pitch of excellence and glory is extinguished. A disposition to truckle is so disreputable that whenever it is manifested it is sure to be treated with ridicule and contempt: and is so prejudicial to efforts of genius that wherever it is discovered there we are certain not to find any of those models of classical learning which dazzle by their lustre, —which are unobnoxious to, and defy the utmost severity of criticism,—and which bask in the meridian rays of public favor. For those, therefore, over whom it has stretched its blighting dominion to attempt to win a respectable rank in the republic of letters would be as absurd and extravagant in idea, as it has always proved hopeless and impossible on trial.

The history of European literature abundantly testifies to the fact that those who have rested satisfied with following the example of others, instead of striking out some unexplored path to fame for themselves, have invariably failed to wake up in the breast of posterity a single emotion of interest or thrill of pleasure. Nor need we look forward to any more enviable doom than early and unreconcilable oblivion so long as we follow with a tame and imbecile subserviency whatever happens to be the prevailing fashion of British literature. To this humiliation the pride of real genius will never condescend, and it is because our writers have not spurned with a steadfast, dignified aversion the unauthorized sway of foreign domination that so many of them have been greeted with the sympathy of benevolent commiseration, and the sneer and contempt of degrading ridicule.

Every period which has, by a bright constellation of superior minds rendered itself illustrious in the annals of solid or polite learning, has treated with such absolute disdain every temptation to follow or to imitate the distinguishing characteristics of any prior golden age, that it is utterly impossible to find any two of those who

stand out in bold relief upon the calender of time that owe their celebrity to the same fascinating peculiarities. Nor of that galaxy which shed lustre on any renowned age can you find any two stars that shone brilliantly in the same sphere. That of Augustus was not only an era of the highest poetical glory, but one that will be admired with speechless wonder and amazement, so long as literature shall last, produced Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, not to mention a shining host of others scarcely inferior to them in intellectual and literary merit, each of whom, though radiating the light of sublime genius, consecrated to immortal remembrance different branches of poetry. A crowd of most extraordinary men, dazzled by the vivid splendor of their thoughts, and enriched by the most brilliant achievements of fancy, the early part of the last century. Swift, and Pope, and Gray, and Bolingbroke, and Addison, with a multitude of inferior luminaries who adorned and illustrated the literature of that period will shine eternal in the spheres of fame. They were all enthusiastically admired: not, however, because there was any striking resemblance between their original, profound and masterly productions, but because each shone in the meridian of his own bright and gorgeous effulgence.

On the revival of letters in Europe an absurd attempt was made to construct literature on classical models. The consequence was, that no reference being made by the writers of that period to the circumstances in which they were placed or the influences under which they acted, and their productions possessing not the energy, fire, depth of thought, ease and harmony of versification, brilliancy of diction, general elegance of style, nor any of the more essential qualities which criticism requires in the character of a sound and an original literature, they were but little studied and less admired. The literature of that age was timid, sordid, sycophantic, inspiring the mind with an affected enthusiasm for ancient lore, while it was radically deficient in those

grand and sublime conceptions that fill and astonish the mind;—those large and comprehensive views which extirpate prejudice, illuminate and strengthen the intellectual powers; those refined, noble, and generous sentiments, which elevate and chasten the affections of the heart; cherish in the breast all the finer feelings of emulation, and give to the mind that microscopic and unwonted sensibility which renders it exquisitely alive to the beautiful productions of genius and art.

These being the defects of the literature of the period to which we have just referred, it is evident that it could have enjoyed but little immediate and no lasting reputation. So soon, however, as the Latin tongue was abandoned as the common vehicle of thought, and authors began to write in the vernacular languages of Europe, a new literature instantly, and, I may say, instinctively, sprung into existence, which in a few years began to assume a strictly national character. Italy was the first to throw off the yoke of ancient bondage. She was soon followed in the career of mental emancipation, at different intervals of time, and in the order in which we shall enumerate them, by Spain, Portugal, England, France, and, last of all, by Germany, which, in little more than a century, reared up a vigorous and gigantic native literature. If we would, therefore, wake up the slumbering fire of genius,—make it to beam with celestial light, and to soar into the higher regions of intellectual happiness, we must declare our literary independence of Great Britain; we must learn to shudder with unaffected horror at the brutal butchery perpetrated by our patriotic songsters on some of the finest poetry that ever British valor inspired. We must cease to listen with patience to the mangled and quivering numbers of British muse reluctantly sounding the paeans of American prowess and patriotism. Whose heart does not sicken,—whose pride is not humbled,—whose honor is not attainted,—whose character is not disgraced when poor Columbia is made feloniously to

strut with an air of vulgar elegance in the place of Britannia, and when he hears one poetaster stupidly exclaim she "needs no bulwarks, no towers along the steep," and another re-echo, with insolent assurance, she "wields the trident," rules the waves," and "her home is on the deep." There is no true lover of his country who would not prefer hearing our triumphs celebrated in the most miserable and beggarly doggerel that ever issued from the cell of a mad-house, than to see them glorified in the most exquisite and sublime strains of British poetry.

In vain, however, may we look for the extirpation of this base and ignoble spirit, so humiliating to American literature, so long as the system of education now pursued in our colleges and universities undergoes no signal amelioration. An original, a profound and comprehensive literature can only result from, and be sustained by deep and extensive erudition. To attempt its erection on any other foundation, would be to construct a frail and flimsy fabric, which would be able to withstand neither the fierce assaults of criticism, the insulting taunts of biting sarcasm, nor the odium of that neglect and contempt, which never fails to hurry the objects of their aversion into the bottomless gulph of early and redemptionless oblivion. Let me ask, is there one who will contend that the standard of scholastic instruction is so high in this country, as to warrant him in supposing, believing or maintaining, that any other fate awaits the generality of those efforts that are being made in the cause of American literature? To this question, I am persuaded, that humbling as it may be to the pride of the understanding, and withering to the hopes of the friend of letters, you will respond in the negative. If an indissoluble connection exists between an elementary instruction, and the subsequent expansion and enlightenment of the mind, then it is evident that the curricula of study pursued in our colleges are not only too limited, but the time dedicated to the attainment of

a knowledge of the sciences, which engage attention too brief to form an adequate and substantial preparation for the more elevated objects of literature.

This precipitancy is in part to be ascribed to the vanity of teachers, but chiefly to the impatience of those whom they instruct. Indeed, such is the restless anxiety of American youth to attain the stature and to assume the responsibilities of men that sufficient time is reluctantly spared to learn even the terms of the sciences, they profess to have studied and pretend to understand. With this more imperfect acquaintance with the mere elements of knowledge, they thoughtlessly rush into the distracting scenes of public life and are soon irrecoverably lost in the boiling vortices of tumultuous faction. He who enters on public life before great progress has been made in intellectual education will never be able to become a proficient scholar afterward. Carried precipitately along by the turbulent current of incessant business no time can be snatched from the toils and troubles of life to pause and reflect,—to generalize knowledge, or to watch over the operations of the mind. For this cause too often do we see those on whom college education has conferred its choicest blessings either relinquish the pursuit of letters altogether, and permit from inclination or necessity the few and feeble impressions that had been made on their minds to be obliterated, or cultivate them without ardor or zeal, at detached and distant intervals of time. We have, consequently, sciolists of every grade and every hue, arrayed in all the arrogance and impertinence of upstart scholarship, with but few of those who possess the reach of thought and copiousness of knowledge of accomplished erudition.

Why is it that in the halls of Congress and in our State Legislatures so few philosophical statesmen are to be found? Men, whose minds having been expanded, enlightened and liberalized by thorough mental cultivation, are qualified to take those profound and original

views which adapt them to new combinations of circumstances, and enable them to sway in the great convulsions of human affairs. Because of the imperfection of collegiate instruction and the contraction of habits which are at war with the profundity of philosophical research and the polish of literary refinement.

Let us dwell for a moment on the character of a statesman who was not less remarkable for the perfection of his educational training, than he is illustrious for the wisdom and comprehensiveness of his farsighted views. The life of Turgot, the extraordinary individual to whom we allude, was wholly engrossed with philosophical and political investigations, up to the time of his ministry, which was in the forty eighth year of his age. He was much devoted to the elegant and ennobling pursuits of literature in general, but more particularly to the comprehension of those moral and political principles which have for their object the advancement of mankind; "to the study," to use his own expressive words, "of the science of public happiness." What was the result? When you read his writings you fancy that you are communing with a man born to legislate for the happiness of a world. From the preamble of Turgot's laws, those master pieces of composition, as they were denominated by Condorcet, we may select numerous specimens of a high, pure and sublime eloquence; and learn also what are some of the intellectual and literary qualifications of a finished statesman. Those acquainted with the labor of Turgot cannot fail to regret, on reading the Institutes of Justinian, that he, instead of Tribonian, the "exquestor of our sacred palace," had not been at the ruler of the world's right hand, and guided the pen that was legislating for so many nations and so many ages.

Look into our halls of legislation, and what do you find there? Accomplished scholars and philosophical statesmen? No; most assuredly. A few brilliant lustres, it is true, are seen to throw their light upon the

dull, impenetrable masses of mortality by whom they are surrounded. The great body of those who crowd those places can set up no just claim to either clearness or comprehensiveness of intellect. The number of those on whom legislative distinction has been conferred and who have been, in some degree, prepared for the offices they fill by laborious application, is incredibly small, while the multitude of those who have rendered their minds insusceptible of improvement by indulgence in low, degrading and enervating pleasures is alarmingly large.

In the heterogeneous compound of ignorance and illiberality, stupidity and stubbornness, talents and attainments, of which our deliberative assemblies consist, there are those who, never venturing beyond the enunciation of a monosyllable, would, however, distinguish themselves from those with whom they are associated by the affectation of what is styled business habits. Who are they, and what are their claims to consideration and respect? Mere men of detail,—successful tradesmen, accustomed to the tranquil accuracy of commerce,—yeomen, trained to the sober and dull concerns of agriculture,—or county court lawyers, acquainted with the quips, and cranks, and low devices of the law, who have been transferred from their money-shops—from the implements of husbandry, or from the arena of municipal litigation, to the bureau of the statesman, when not one of them has proved himself to be an able, accurate, and perfect man of business, but wretched drivelliers and drudges, wholly destitute of those enlarged understandings that enable men to comprehend and to enforce great principles.

Read the speeches of those who would make laws for a nation of freemen? Of what do they consist? Stale, common place quotations from the Latin classics, for few of them know any thing of the Greek, threadbare philosophy, false and canting morality, vulgar and vindictive personal vituperation, pointless wit and malicious

ridicule, uttered with all the uncivil vehemence of angry passion, glowing with volcanic heat and fury. Beauty of diction, elegance and profundity of thought, cogency and relevancy of argument, flowing in rich streams from the depths of luminous and extensive minds, that have ranged through the whole extent of human literature, are rarely to be found in our legislative assemblies. Nor at this need we be surprised, for, as has been truly remarked by Bentham, "nothing but laborious application, and a clear and comprehensive intellect, can enable a man on any given subject, to employ successfully, relevant arguments drawn from the subject itself. To employ personalities, neither labor nor intellect is required. In this sort of a contest, the most idle and the most ignorant are quite on a par with, if not superior to the most industrious and the most highly gifted individuals."

In no vocation do we observe the injury which literature sustains from our system of education so strikingly illustrated, as in the manner in which the public press in the United States is conducted. Its practical results can in no way be so accurately estimated, as by ascertaining what is the average character of our literature. This, it must be conceded, is to be found in the actual condition of the public press. If any doubt should exist on this subject, it must be removed when it is recollected that a large majority of those who belong to the "corps editorial" have received what is denominated a university education. The style in which they write, and the principles by which their conduct is regulated must therefore be regarded as the legitimate results of education.

There was a time when genius and literature crowded the public journals with instruction, and filled their fleeting pages with the sweetest effusions of fancy. Then it was that homage was paid to intellectual superiority, and virtue received due commendation and reward; then the object was to inculcate morality, and

not to excuse or to defend vice ; to confirm attachment to the constitution and to secure obedience to the laws, and not to alienate the affections of the people by ensnaring them in the toils of dismembering factions ; to advance literature by illustrating new principles, and not to disgrace it by making it the scourge and pest of society ; to throw light upon history and not to darken it by a recklessness of truth ; to exemplify and elucidate the characters of the deceased, and not to obscure and render unintelligible those of the living by flattery and falsehood ; to strengthen the caucus of just criticism, and not by an unrestrained license to encourage wanton and unauthorized lucubrations of mediocral minds ; to promote a taste for the refined joys of elegant literary retirement, and not a relish for the gross and degrading gratifications of sequestered voluptuousness ; to aim at the approval of the wise and just, and not to court the ignoble breath of vulgar fame.

Proud indeed, would I be could I with justice declare that this is the general character of the public press as it is conducted at present. Facts, however, which cannot be disguised or misinterpreted constrain me to alledge that it is its antipodes in almost every particular. Since the epoch of the revolution, the influence of the newspaper press has been widened and deepened, but in patriotism, intellect, and literature it has lamentably deteriorated. We are not disposed, however, to pass upon it a sweeping sentence of indiscriminate denunciation. Amongst those who are engaged in JOURNALISM, a few may be found who, for solid learning and great talents, and a steadfast rectitude of principle, would have reflected honor on any country in the purest days of its morality or the highest periods of its literature. The conduct of the individuals to whom we allude, is as far above all praise as the principles by which it is regulated is proof against the allurements of the strongest temptation. Aware of the obligations which they are under, both to their conscience and their country they

are uniformly found in the active exertion of every effort, and in the employment of every fair and plausible means that seems calculated to drive from the atmosphere of public life those lowering clouds which look so dark and threatening, and to clear the walks of social intercourse of all those impediments by which vice would obstruct its progress. Deeply penetrated with a sense of the high responsibilities of the station they occupy, and knowing that to the remotest verge of civilization the newspaper press exerts an overshadowing, if not an omnipotent control, they do all in their power to give strength, firmness and uprightness to public opinion; to fortify and confirm true domestic ties; to elevate, refine and embellish private manners, and to encourage a taste in the public mind for elegant and scientific pursuits. In the United States newspapers have a more extensive circulation, and are sought, by all ranks of society, with more eagerness than are similar publications in any other country in the world. Indeed, we daily meet with individuals who flatter themselves into the belief that their attainments in literature are rather remarkable, and who, nevertheless, have derived their whole stock of shadowy and unsubstantial information from the political journals. Moreover, the style of composition of our daily and weekly literature is a model to most of those who are in the habit of studying it; and it is not uncommon for such persons, without being aware of the presumption of which they are guilty, to arrogate to themselves the dignity of men of letters. It is manifest, therefore, that too much talent, learning and integrity cannot be employed in the public press. We could designate a number of editors who, sensible of the influence they exert over the literary character of the nation, never cease, by the force of precept and the example of a pure and an elegant style of writing to do all in their power to advance the cause of popular letters. Such men are entitled to our warmest gratitude, and to them too much respectability cannot be given.

To these encomia, however, nineteen twentieths of those who assume the responsibilities of editorship can establish, by their past conduct or prospective reformation, no just claim. At least, that proportion of them are much more remarkable for moral depravity and mental weakness, than for irreproachable purity of deportment, and intellectual vigor; for stupid ignorance, than for respectable attainments in literature; for gross indelicacy of expression, than strict decorum of manners; for an insolent contempt of truth, than a stern adherence to rigid justice; for a total recklessness of principle, than for a mild and blameless purity of purpose.

Instead of considering sound principles as immutable as adamant, and as indestructible as the pillar of Smeaton, they veer round with every tide of circumstances, as often as the wind shifts a point, or a woman changes her mind. Trimmers and time servers, they, from party purposes, alternately defend and defame the same men and the same measures, and without an emotion of shame or a pang of remorse, irrecoverably sink themselves into a bottomless gulph of incongruities. They spread the pall of indiscriminate forgetfulness over the faults of an infamous friend, while they wrong in his most sacred rights, and torture in his dearest feelings, the undebauched foe. They irrecoverably sully the purity of patriot honor, while those attainted with turpitude and disgraced by crime rise to greatness, under their pestilential auspices. Bearing the impress of omnipotent depravity, and heedless of the horror of such a remorse as vice, unredeemed by a single virtue must bring, they sweep the land with a moral and political pestilence.

That which has struck us as one of the strangest peculiarities of the times, and furnishes us also with conclusive proof of a revolting state of morals for which the profligate should blush, is to see those very journals which are known to be the irreconcilable foes of every generous, humane and virtuous sentiment encircled with

the radiance of the most extensive popularity. Journals conducted by men whose every act has proved them to be as cold, deadly and unforgiving in their enmities as they are notoriously false, faithless, and perfidious in their friendships : infamous in all that is vindictive in depravity, they assail without shame or sorrow, characters the most upright and immaculate, with as little hesitation or remorse, as they do those, who, like themselves, waste their time and consume their health in pleasure, riot, and debauchery : who, to revenge an insult, deep and inexpiable, or fancied and imaginary, have had recourse to means so detestable that the most treacherous would hesitate to credit, and which ordinary uprightness would have even perjury to disown ; who, to gratify a malicious inclination for biting sarcasm, and to indulge overrated talents for obscene wit, and vulgar crimination, have often sacrificed every feeling of nature and every law of honor : men, whom the most humane philosophy has not civilized, the most munificent charity softened, the tenderest friendship attached, the fullest concessions conciliated, the sternest morality reclaimed, and the purest faith converted, have, in reckless insubordination to and contempt of the appeals of friends, the exactions of society, the claims of family and the terrors of the law, goaded with cruel and unrelenting fury the votaries of virtue into the disgusting mysteries of every frightful form of vice. Such men there are, who watch over the public press, and whose influence in giving character to public opinion is not limited or circumscribed. They are not only popular, but their journals are read with an avidity which is shocking to morality, insulting to religion and in frontless mockery of all those glorious hopes which the patriot must cherish in despite of the present disheartening prospects, for the present elevation and future advancement of American literature.

Our system of education has rendered itself obnoxious to critical aversion by inculcating false ideas of

scholarship, and by causing very limited attainments to pass current in society for deep and varied learning. Young men are apt to believe, when they leave college, invested with the honors of the baccalaureate, that their education is finished, when in fact they have scarcely passed the threshold of science and letters. That those therefore, who glow with the fire of genius should, after the phantoms of collegiate instruction have been pursued for a fixed length of time, be anxious to become authors is not a matter of much surprise. Before the mind has been enriched by the stores of abundant knowledge, and matured in the field of extensive observation; before it has formed the least acquaintance with the world, or even familiarity with itself, it precipitately rushes in

"Where angels dare not tread."

With all the impatience of youth and hazardousness of inexperience, to restrain and guide; with nothing but the blind partiality of self-love and the confidence of unwavering hope to buoy it up in the perilous enterprize, the arrogance of self-conceited scholarship enters the lists where genius and knowledge have formidable arrayed themselves. Seduced by the persuasive suggestions of fancy, and urged by the delusive promptings of ambition, it dares to look on the burning glories of the meridian sun, before its tender vision can bear the feeble and scattered glimmerings of the stars. The consequence is that much of our literature, from the state of mental impreparation in which it is produced, is light, trivial and fantastic; consisting of crude and fanciful speculations, which glitter with the tinsel of false wit, or scholastic trifling, swelled into a fictitious importance by the specious but shadowy embellishments of rhetoric.

The decidedly vulgar taste of the reading part of the nation may also, in part, be ascribed to our system of precipitate education. Exceedingly superficial in its character, it has awakened the inferior but has failed to

reach the higher powers of thought; vain and pompous, it has led the imagination to spurn the restraints of sound philosophy, while it has taught it to revel with delight in all that is romantic, exaggerated and improbable. Works, therefore, of reason and research—the finished productions of the old English classics—have given way to the unprecedented popularity of performances of pure fiction. Indifferently qualified by education and unencouraged by the taste of the public, authors have almost ceased to think or to reason—to illustrate or to enforce—while they waste intellectual existence in weaving wild and improbable speculations or in indulging the revolting and insupportable extravagances of wanton imaginations. Instead of sweetening and embellishing the social circle by inspiring a taste for the refined and elegant occupations of learning and the muse, they render it insipid, if not disgusting by encouraging a morbid relish for the fiery host of absurd fancies, with which the majority of modern novels teem. In this grovelling subserviency to the corrupt inclination of the times, there is mingled no manly thought of a higher future—no toiling for posterity—no inspiring hope of a glorious immortality.

Our system of education is certainly defective, inasmuch as it does not embrace in the circle of its disinterested benevolence, the instruction of females. This, such as it is, rendered useless and disgusting, however, by the frippery of modern manners, I do not alledge^s has been neglected. No man in his senses will contend that our young ladies do not spend a sufficient number of hours at the piano to ruin the health of an Amazon, or trip the ‘light fantastic toe’ to such perfection as to cause Terpsichore herself to blush, or learn enough of French to corrupt the principles of a Lucretia, or acquire such a taste for works of mere gayety and amusement, the bloated offspring of extravagant fancy, as to cause them to neglect if not to contemn every other species of literature. These, however, are the defects not the excellen-

cies of education, which consist not in an acquaintance with that literature which, addressing itself exclusively to the imagination, lulls into the languors of pleasure, and has for its object a delicate and emasculate refinement, but that which embraces philosophy, eloquence, history, and those other departments of learning which refer chiefly to the heart and understanding, and depend upon a knowledge of human nature, and an attentive study of all that contributes to its actual enjoyments.

Such attainments, with the sway which women already exert over modern society, would have the happiest effect in giving a taste for literary and scientific pursuits. Enable them to feel a deep and an ennobling interest in the cultivation of letters, and men will be constrained, as a matter of necessity, in order to maintain their natural superiority, to turn their attention directly to the expansion and elevation of the mind. This would arouse the dormant faculties of the opulent and unemployed portion of the community, who study more the means of sensual indulgence than those of intellectual enjoyment. Such persons find great comfort and countenance in the degradation to which the female mind is reduced by light and trivial accomplishments, which require no exertion of thought for their display. But enrich it with substantial learning, and you, at once, cut off this source of self-gratulation. There is no being for whom an educated and a deserving woman feels a contempt so sovereign and unutterable as she does for a stupid and illiterate man. She shrinks from him with a dislike at once instinctive and unconquerable. Nor is the aversion of an ignorant and a vulgar woman for an educated and a polished man much less. The influence of intellectual illumination over her mind is such that if she should be unfortunately united in wedlock to such an individual, it would be impossible for her to be happy. If she is neglected, she imagines that the time he spends in his study should be devoted to her personal service. Milton's first wife, whom he married from a sudden fan-

cy, was unable to endure his literary habits, and finding his house too solitary for her romping disposition, beat his nephews and conveyed herself away at the expiration of the honey-moon. The wife of Bishop Cooper became so jealous of his books that she consigned the labor of many years to the flames, and the alledged reason why Lady Seville destroyed the most valuable manuscripts of Sir Henry was that they engrossed too much of his time. If she is not neglected, so mortifying to an illiterate woman is the infinite and unapproachable superiority of an accomplished man that she cannot obliterate from her mind the harrowing conviction that his attention to her, though the most tender and soothing, is the insolence of familiarity or the pride of condescension. Her inferiority, she is aware, cannot be concealed from him, and if she is not neglected and avoided, the most favorable construction she puts upon his conduct is that she is pitied ; and such is the mysterious structure of the female heart that rather than be pitied she would be despised. The ignorance, therefore, of females is the chief cause why literary men are generally so unfortunate in the state of wedlock.

Both nature and reason have, in civilized society, made women the dispensers of every species of social distinction, and this, if they are properly educated, acting on the strongest principle of our nature, will cause every man in whom all sense of shame is not blunted, every emotion of pride stifled, and all desire to win the friendship and esteem of the sex extinguished, to place a proper estimate on learning. When women read they talk of what they have read, not however, from affectation or pedantry, as stupid coxcombry would alledge, for the two-fold purpose of deterring those who possess knowledge from making a proper use of it, and to screen their ignorance from detection and mortifying exposure, but because it is an agreeable and instructive amusement as well as a most natural subject of conversation. Let books travel from the library to the saloon and we shall

soon see who will keep them company or be there to give them a warm and friendly reception. When women cultivate a taste for letters, those who would shine as men of fashion find it necessary to establish a more substantial claim to respect than that which consists in the glitter of an elegant costume, or the flippancy of a whining cockney who, enamoured of his own eloquence, and swollen with the pride of self-conceited merit, considers himself at liberty to tire by his loquacious nonsense all those who may happen to be so unfortunate as to be in the purlieus of his insolence.

We may transport ourselves with joy, and hail with acclimations of triumph, the graceless sycophant, who lulls us into a dangerous security by flattering our intelligence, our taste for literature and the elegant refinement of our manners: and we may convulse ourselves with rage when the honest critic denies the one or questions the truth of either of the others, but the fact is, and it should be told in language that cannot be misconstrued, rebuked in a spirit that will not admit of compromise, and those beggarly substitutes for education, which are the cause of it, frowned on with a firmness that cannot flinch or be flattered into a dereliction of its duty, that there is not in either sex or in any rank of life, from the level in which penury pines, to the palace in which all shine in the deceitful glare of fastidious refinement, any real sensibility to those magical powers of literature, which enchain, soften and regulate the heart; those sublime conceptions of elevated genius, which command the admiration of ages and survive the revolutions of empires. A prostituted press; the ignorance of a majority of those who constitute what is called the learned professions: the rage for light and frivolous reading, together with some other causes which we shall more particularly notice presently, have extinguished all desire in the mass of what is considered good society to reach the higher regions of intellectual improvement.

Though this is a truth which cannot be denied or impugned, he who has dared to make the least reflection on society has been rebuked in a spirit of the angriest resentment. Such conduct is exceedingly silly and childish. Passion and presumption are poor succedanea for reason and intelligence, and the attempt to substitute the former for the latter will never be able to refute the fact, sanctioned by the caucus of polite criticism, as well as by the results of common observation, that a want of taste for literature is an infallible mark of vulgarity of mind, or that to frame a state of society entitled in any respect to be regarded as good, around the opulent embellishments of which literature does not throw its elegant fascinations, is utterly impossible.

What are the elements of good society? The competent judge will at once respond good manners and good conversation. These are fundamental and indispensable. Without either of them such a thing as good society, in the proper acceptation of the phrase, cannot possibly exist. The former, that is, good manners, imply a general desire to please, and a delicate perception of what may be pleasing or displeasing to others. The latter, that is, good conversation, implies varied and extended knowledge, combined with a high degree of intellectual cultivation. To look, therefore, for either the one or the other amongst a vain, frivolous, ignorant selfish and unfeeling set of persons, would be absurd and preposterous. The individual well read in elegant literature will be able to multiply and vary the topics of interesting conversation, to an almost unlimited extent; selecting them with judgment, and he will descant on them with elegance and ease. Uniting wit and knowledge—lively and vigorous sallies with trite, racy and interesting remarks—he will be easy, dignified and courteous, but not familiar—polite and polished, without arrogant pretension. Society made up of such individuals is perfectly good—it will be enlightened and accomplished. “Such a superiority,” says Hume, “do the

pursuits of literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." It was his attainments in literature, above all his other accomplishments, notwithstanding the dark shades and deep rooted vices of his character, that has cast a charm around the memory and fame of Julius Caesar, and it was the ineffectual attempts of James the 1st, to figure as an elegant author that sunk him into contempt. By an intimacy with the writings of those who have felt most strongly and naturally, and thought most deeply and vigorously, we acquire a purity of feeling, an elevation of sentiment and a dignity of character that will generally prevent us from being tainted and poisoned by the pestiferous breath of moral or political prostitution.

To the existence of an original and a profound national literature, independence of thought and fearlessness in the avowal and defence of principle are considered indispensable. These features have been regarded as peculiarly pre-eminent in the constitution of an intellectual character. Indeed, so prevalent is this sentiment that much extravagant eulogy has been bestowed upon our republican form of government on account of its supposed tendency to develope and sustain independence and intrepidity in all our intellectual operations. Much as I would be delighted, could I believe this true, my partialities shall not so far debauch me from my allegiance to truth, as to induce me to shrink from attempting to expose its fallacy. It is an opinion that has not been deduced from observation, and cannot, consequently be sustained by an appeal to facts. A little reflection would have convinced those who have found in this supposed effect of our form of government occasion for hyperbolical bursts of patriotic eloquence that the tendency of republics is directly averse to a bold, manly, and an unreserved expression of opinion. This has proved to be

Invariably the result, at least, whenever democratic institutions have been prematurely introduced, as was the case in France, or when injudicious or intemperate efforts have been made to over-expand the democratic principle, as is the case, at the present time, in the United States. Between the cringing courtier in the palace, and the supple demagogue on the stump, there is but little difference. The one flatters, and fawns, and cheats the King—the other puffs, and promises, and pledges, and gulls the people. Compare the mean compliance and fawning sycophancy—the vice excused or defended—the dereliction of duty palliated or approved—the inconsistency of conduct in morals and in politics reconciled and recommended, from which the unscared conscience must instinctively recoil, when France was a republic, with the stern, uncurtly truths to which Louis the 14th, that impatient and prodigal despot, was constrained to listen to, from the lips of Bessuet, Massilon, Fenelon, and Bourdaloue, when France was a monarchy! Where do we see that masculine cast of thought, and caustic severity of expression applied to the follies, vices and inconsistencies of those who hold places in the United States, by those who have already received, or who look up to them for office, as caused the throne of France to tremble, and drove the perfidious Henry the 8th, of England, from his LLCdy purpose; who, instead of sending Latimer to the stake, as he had threatened, and as was his fell purpose to do, after hearing that virtuous and undaunted prelate repeat with additional force and severity, his denunciations of vices of which the king was notoriously guilty, took him into greater favor than he enjoyed before.

Where is the candidate for office who dares remind the people of their vices and of their follies? Who will venture to reprove them for their selfishness and their injustice? Where is the fearless minister of the gospel who will brave oppression by telling his parishioners of the blackness of their perfidy, and the malig-

nity of their ingratitude? What novelist, unmindful of the persecution of Cooper, will venture to record the treasonable suspicion that we are not the most refined and elegant people in the world? What patriot will dare maintain that we are not the most moral and religious—the most literary and scientific—the bravest and most invincible people that omnipotence ever blessed, or the sun ever shone upon?

Indeed, so far is this dastardly truckling to popular opinion carried, that the aspiring politician submits with extreme reluctance to the publication of his sentiments clearly, explicitly and irrevocably expressed. When they stand upon record he knows they may be brought up in judgment against him, after which, he will not find it so easy, by shuffling and prevarication, to keep himself in the "aura popularis," as when he is confronted by nothing more than the hurried, perhaps misunderstood, and imperfectly recollected expressions of debate. On an occasion when a young representative had made a most finished display of parliamentary eloquence, and was requested to furnish a copy of it for publication, an aged kinsman, hocknied and practised in the ways of politics, and who had experienced much inconvenience on account of his frequent changes of opinion, advised him to decline the honor, remarking that it was impossible for him to foresee how long it would be expedient to identify himself with the sentiments to which he had given utterance in a burst of most impassioned oratory.

The intolerance of party spirit in the United States is such, and it results naturally from the peculiar character of our institutions, that we have reason to fear it has tended very much to repress the exertions of genius and talents in the cause of letters. The obligation which almost every zealous partisan considers himself under to condemn, where no crime has been committed, and to denounce, where no moral principle has been violated, simply because opinions have been expressed that oppose his party or personal interest, is so severe a re-

flection on our justice and liberality, as must certainly cool the ardor of authors of merit--as must very much diminish their desire, if it does not so alarm their fears, as to deter them from appearing before the public. The disheartening clamor, and vulgar opposition which have been too often excited, exclusively on this ground, against those who have dared to speak freely and frankly, must doubtless have caused many writers to pause and hesitate, with fear and trembling, before they ventured to vindicate their claims to respectability or their right to reward. When an author knows that should he refuse to bend himself to the support of absurd principles, or to espouse the pretensions of an ignorant "co-terie," partisan persecution, which rages in the United States with the fiercest violence, will cause his sentiments to be misrepresented and caricatured—his motives to be impugned—his style of composition to be with illiberal severity criticised and unfeelingly condemned, and himself made an object of provoking ridicule and contempt, he must not only feel conscious of the possession of all the loftier elements of intellect, but he must glow with a spirit that will spurn every difficulty, and a courage that will conquer every disadvantage, if the rich current of original and independent thought is not congealed.

Where a firmness and rectitude of purpose which cannot be shaken by menaces, nor seduced by the temptations of power are most needed, we find the most questionable evidence of their existence. The opinion of the public is but little more than that of the public journalists, and it rules with a tyrant's despotism over every interest in the country. But who are they, that assume the terrible responsibility of giving character to public opinion? The hireling defenders of party and the retained apologists of faction. Does Augene so far forget himself and his allegiance to the party to which he has sworn fealty, as to deny its infallibility and to suggest the propriety of reform, he is at once ostracised

and pursued by all the furies of vengeance as a renegade and vagabond. Does any one hearken to the advice given by Phœbus to Phœton, "in medio tutissimus ibis," and attempt to steer a middle course, he is exposed to the merciless cross-fire of contending factions. Is any one an aristocrat in sentiment? he is charged with a desire to lord it over and oppress the poor. Does he defend the democracy? he is denounced as an agrarian, disorganizer and anarchist. Does he undertake to keep a strict eye over the morals and manners of the public? he will find vices and follies in all ranks of society sufficient to provoke the severest censure, but woe to him who dares to touch the sacred mantle of its infallibility —he will certainly be rewarded for his toil by having conferred on him the complimentary cognomen of snarling, malicious harranguer—a cold, merciless and unfor-giving misanthrope.

With all the disadvantages under which they operate, those that conduct the public press, are perfectly familiar, and being impelled by the "res angusta domi," they must either starve in the midst of plenty, or pusillanimously and criminally desert their duty and submit without a murmur to the despotism of party, whatever may be the absurdity or the intolerance of its decrees. They must silence the voice of conscience, while they listen with breathless subserviency to the dictates of faction; they must deform and disfigure the truth, while they gild with seductive plausibility unblushing falsehood; they must confer distinction upon others, (such as it is, and such as it ever will be, while derived from so foul a source,) while they do violence to, and degrade themselves; they must float quietly along with the tide of unprincipled and grasping selfishness, and make no attempt to calm the raging waves of vice and folly, or to stem the torrent of intemperate passion. Real automata, moved by the will of a master, or Swiss soldiers, ready to fight under any banner, and willing to defend any cause.

The sectional peculiarities, which are observed to characterize the population of many of the States of the Union, should be mentioned as amongst the causes that have retarded our literature, and prevented it from assuming a national character. Before the war of independence the colonies had not banded together for any common purpose. Holding but little intercourse with each other, and differing in many instances in language and religion, there was but little community of sentiment or interest amongst them. At that time it is certain that nothing like a national character had been formed. Ever since the time when they confederated together in the cause of freedom, and became a separate and independent nation, they have been a refuge to the unfortunate of every clime, and a sanctuary to crimes of every dye. Within the the limits of the United States, we see representatives from every quarter of the globe, and hear the language of almost every latitude spoken. Confirmed habits must therefore be assailed and overturned—ancient customs relinquished—new modes of thinking and feeling acquired—asperities of character softened and smoothed down—prejudices removed and predilections forgotten, before the population of this country can present an uniform national aspect. Nor can any good reason be given for believing that this result may soon be anticipated. The same cause, which has hitherto acted to prevent it, is not only still in operation, but seems in fact to increase in a reduplicating ratio. So long as this glorious republic shall last, and so long as the governments of Europe shall find it to their interest, from necessity or inclination, to oppress the people, so long will myriads continue to flock to our shores in search of a home and of happiness, and so long will it be unreasonable to expect that the population of this country will present an uniform character, or harmonize with the beautiful scenery over which it is and will be scattered, or act in perfect concert with

its social and political institutions. Till then our hopes of a national literature must not be sanguine.

There is at this time no cause that operates more prejudicially to the interests of literature, than the complete conquest which the love of money has obtained over the affections. No other desire is felt—no other is expressed. No class of persons has escaped the fangs of its despotism. Every rank in society feels its malignant sway, and so clearly is it incorporated with every thought, word and action, that no influence seems able to circumscribe or subvert it. Neither morality, religion, or philosophy has been able to prevent the most gifted minds in the land from worshipping at the shrine of a most unholy and debasing idolatry. Those who should have been employed in responding to the insulting taunt, “In the four quarters of the globe who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? what does the world yet owe to American physicians and surgeons?” have been blunting the keenest sensibilities, and prostituting the most precious time and the noblest faculties to the ignoble service of commerce; to speculating in lands; to gambling in stocks, and to time-serving in politics.

So widely has the pestilence spread, and so desolating has been the ruin which it has scattered over all those glorious anticipations of the future renown of our literature, and which we should not cease to encourage so long as hope sheds one solitary cheering ray on the subject, that it has already nearly deadened all the vivacity and extinguished nearly all the ardor of genius. If Napoleon, when he pointed the finger of scorn at England, and denounced her as a nation of shopkeepers had included us in the same category, he would not have treated us with injustice. If Talleyrand, were to arise from the grave and visit us as he did nearly half a century ago, he would say now, if the testimony of Marryat

is to be credited, as he said then, "I do not know an American who has not sold his horse or his dog." Such a state of society is very unlike that in which military propensities predominate, in which classical studies are cultivated, and erudite speculations are encouraged.

It is a fact, and it would be useless and absurd to attempt its denial, that money has assumed an importance in the United States which has never been ascribed to it, nor experienced in those countries which have been rendered famous by military achievement, or illustrious by the profundity of their philosophical, or by the splendor of their poetical literature. Who can desire a more striking or conclusive exemplification of the deep-rooted existence of the spirit of sordidness than is to be found in the fact that our laws actually suborn those not proof against bribery to betray those who may have been allied to them in villainy, or, as often happens, to charge those with crime whose characters have never been sullied even by imputation. France, stained by the blood and disgraced by the horrors of rape and revolution, would shrink with disgust from the use of means which a tyrant would blush openly to employ.

When virtue is rewarded and vice punished by the giving and taking of money, the possession of it assumes a dignity and an importance so overshadowing that the former must necessarily soon cease to exist, and the latter to be restrained by the fear of punishment. The exaction of a fine of those whom opulence protects from feeling the sacrifice, has but little if any tendency to suppress the ebullitions of the depraved propensities, or to moderate the violence of rebellious passions. The principle, moreover, on which it is imposed, is at war with that equality of rights which should never cease to exist amongst freemen. But if it should unfortunately happen, it should not be permitted to grow out of the fictitious superiority which wealth may give one individual over another. There is no justice in that law which, for the commission of the same offence, doom-

virtuous poverty to the toil and infamy of a work-house, while opulent villainy is suffered to roam at large seeking whom it may devour.

"Virtue should be its own reward," but where is the morality of those malicious sneers which are, in the newspapers, indignantly flung at those who, after having received a favor from honesty, refuse to insult it by the tender of pecuniary compensation. Such is the extravagant value placed on money that it already threatens to arrest every fine impulse of the heart, and to extirpate every noble sentiment of the soul. No deed of generosity, disinterestedness, magnanimity, or mere honesty is performed without the authors of it being at once insulted with the proffer of money, and whether refused, as it ever will be by the honorable and highminded, or accepted, as it ever will be, by the grovelling, greedy, and mercenary, all obligation is forever cancelled. The noblest acts are thus reduced by the spirit of avarice to the level with the vulgarest transactions. The consciousness of having acted nobly—if having dealt justly, or of having performed even a duty, is not regarded as a sufficient motive to, or adequate reward for, uprightness of conduct; while, to refund money fraudulently embezzled is enough to obviate every stain—to re-establish a character for honesty, and to restore to such confidence as interested avarice is capable of reposing.

Literature cannot be made to spring out of every soil, or to bloom and flourish in the ripeness of vigorous maturity in every clime. This happens only amongst those who have made considerable progress in civilization and in the cultivation of letters, and at those remarkable epochs when great events call out the sublime energies of stupendous minds. Under such circumstances, it not only flourishes, but it subjects the intemperance of passion to the dominion of reason: and this supposes the existence of a strong sense of justice,—a lively sensibility to moral and physical beauty, and a

lofty sentiment of admiration of great and ennobling actions. Then it is that literature agitates all the stagnant sensibilities of the heart, and awakens all the dormant faculties of the soul; then it excites an influence which no opposition can resist and which no revulsion can overthrow.

How widely different is this state of things from that which obtains in a community where money is the God of their idolatry! Those who compose it will be found perfectly deaf to every appeal, however earnest and moving, that does not bring some sensual gratification, promise the promotion of some sordid interest, or the achievement of some selfish end. Bewildered by the gaudy pomp of ostentatious display, they would not exchange one day of sensual enjoyment for years of the highest seasoned and most refined intellectual pleasure; they would not relinquish one single scurce of gross, grovelling self-indulgence to have their names recorded high in the annals of deathless fame. Lulled into the languors of luxurious ease, they are strangers to every sentiment that is generous or ennobling in its nature. Of the emotions of private benevolence, their hearts are as ignorant as their minds are incapable of comprehending the necessity and importance of public-spirited munificence. To yield to the impulses of the former or embrace the sublimating views of the latter, they would consider the blind extravagance of wanton prodigality.

While superfluous and unwieldy wealth produces a neglect of the claims of literature, it fosters a taste for the gross allurements of taste and smell. The high, rational and satisfying enjoyments of those who delight in the solitude of study, or the acclamations that hail the triumphs of successful genius, are regarded by those whom wealth enables to indulge their sensual inclinations, as a mere mortmain, or a tinkling symbol. To be encircled by the glittering and fluctuating blandishments of high life, is sufficient to realize the highest hopes of the most ambitious, and these have been so diversified,

and have been carried to such a degree of refinement, that they minister in the completest manner to "recherche" wants of the most fastidious. The senses, thus beset with the most captivating seducements, the mind must be, by the excessive indulgence of the corporeal faculties, deprived of its energy, and the fancy of its fervor and vivacity.

Not only has literature lost its attractions in the eager pursuit of money, but the prevailing spirit of the age has caused the public mind to be actually hostile to it. The cultivation of letters has not only ceased to be an honorable and a dignified employment, but has become decidedly disreputable. Instead of promoting his interest, the votary of literature will find that so soon as it is ascertained that his time is employed exclusively in endeavoring to enlarge the sphere of knowledge, his hopes of worldly advancement will be blasted. Such, indeed, is the degradation to which men of letters are reduced, that unless the proudest spirits, glowing with the fires of immortal genius, will descend from the lofty peaks of Parnassus, to mingle in the conflicts of an inferior order of beings; unless they will tread the crowded thoroughfares of business, and lose themselves in the tumultuous intercourse of an agitated city, they are set down as brainless visionaries, whom instruction cannot enlighten nor interest reclaim from the dominion of distempered fancy. He who dares to sport in the fairy fields of imagination—to create around him poetry's pleasing images—to live in "his own green world of thought," wholly disqualifies himself, in the eyes of the vulgar public to engage with success in the common concerns of life. How gross, greedy, and grovelling is this absurdity! Because the mind blazes into the celestial fire of genius, and has been rescued from the thraldom of ignorance and prejudice by the polite and elegant accomplishments of literature, is it unfitted for the ordinary duties and responsibilities of common men? Is he who has made mankind his study—who has analyzed

his intellectual and moral nature—who takes comprehensive views of passing events—who can reveal the secrets of the future in consequence of his intimacy with the eventful history of the past, necessarily incompetent to the task of understanding and practising the vulgar details of business? No man who is capable of the simplest effort of thought would maintain it, and yet it is the conclusion to which the tradesman's logic leads him, and from his decision, in this mercenary age, there is no appeal. He who feels proud of his tuneful capacities, and would rise into the regions of fancy, or soar into the empyrean fields of thought, must curb the unholy desire,—must repress his yearnings after the proud trophies of renown,—must crush a spirit that is superior to the charms and allurements of wealth,—and must manacle and pinion down in obscurity that sublimity and richness of imagination that would fill immensity with its glory, to become a dull, plodding and pains-taking being. He must submit to see literature proscribed and genius, that might have soared to a flight as high as that of Homer, and have blazed with a splendor as heavenly as that of Milton, ostracised and driven from the heights of Parnassus by the withering sneer of the stupid shaver, or the cruel persecution of the unprincipled usurer, before whom, in this financial age, society moulds its blandest complexions, with a cringing sycophancy that would disgrace the utmost excesses of oriental adulation. For whom are these sacrifices to be made? For those who believe that the highest thought not immediately convertible into gold, is more valueless than the basest counterfeit; for muck-worms who are “of the earth, earthy”—for specimens of humanity, from whom God's image and inscription has been worn, and whom, when he calls them to a fearful responsibility, he will scarcely be able to recognize for his own..

Though the injury which literature is experiencing, from the belief that its pursuits and those of business are incompatible, is undeniably great; reflection evinces

that it is not founded in reason, and history demonstrates by a great number of the most illustrious facts, that it has not been deduced from observation. The wisdom of Solomon has never been questioned, and yet he was the author of the Canticles; great as Demosthenes was as an orator, he is not less celebrated as a practical statesman; Julius Cæsar was not the less able as a general, because he had the capacity to leave in his elegant and finished account of his campaigns a monument of his fame as an author; Cicero won as many laurels at the bar as he did in his study; Shakspeare was equal as a theatrical manager, and superior as a dramatic poet, to any of his successors; Milton was nearly as well known in the age in which he flourished as a politician, as he is at present as a poet; Lorenzo de Medici and Sir Wm. Forbes were as famous for their literary and scientific attainments, as they were for their financial talents; no one will question the regal abilities of old Frederick of Prussia, Catharine the 2d of Russia, or Elizabeth of England, because they devoted much time to literary composition; Lord Chesterfield was as polished a courtier as any member of the Regent's court, and also a very voluminous classical writer; Sheridan, though the author of some of the finest comedies in any language was as able a debater as any man in the British House of Commons; posterity does not esteem Franklin the less highly as a business man because we admire his literary labors, and honor his scientific achievements; Count Rumford was nearly as able as an officer in the field, as he was successful in the cultivation of science; though Aikenside was an excellent practical physician, his Pleasures of the Imagination combine as much fine feeling, rich imagery, classical elegance, and sweetness of versification as any didactic poem of the same extent in the English language; Goethe, though sublime as a poet, was able as a practical anatomist; Cobbett was the ablest writer and the best farmer in the British House of Commons; John Quincy Adams is the most

business and the most literary man in Congress; and Marryatt is an experienced sea-captain and an elegant author. Illustrations might be easily multiplied, but enough surely have been adduced to satisfy you not only that it is absurd but invidious and cruelly unjust, to allege that merely because a man may have literary pre-dilections, he is therefore disqualified for business.

That a pure literature is patriotism's most steadfast friend I think you are hardly disposed to doubt, after what has already been urged upon that point; and that wealth, the common enemy of both morals and letters, is its irreconcilable and exterminating foe we shall not find difficult to establish. Superabundant affluence, un-anointed by the ameliorating influence of polite accomplishments in literature, and the substantial attainments in science invariably produces an irresistible desire to indulge in the voluptuous enjoyments of luxury. These are purely sensual and selfish in their nature, and turn thought, feeling and action exclusively upon those effeminate pleasures which minister to personal gratification. Just in the ratio that this effect is produced, do we find the intellectual powers weakened, and the control of the moral faculties over human conduct diminished. As the barriers which oppose the free expansion of the soul are multiplied will it be found difficult to soften and humanize the heart,—to awaken the kindlier sympathies of human nature,—to purify the social affections,—to teach self-denial and self-control, and to inspire love to God and good will to man.

Amongst those who have become effeminate by emasculating debauchery, truth and candor, integrity and virtue cannot long exist, and their degradation will go on increasing, with a frightful impetuosity, until such excellence will be regarded as the ridiculous fancies of an ignorant and obsolete age. Long, however, before dereliction of principle reaches this point, a servile and sycophantic philosophy, which, yielding to and flattering the vices that prevail, will not only be popular with

those infected with wealth's inglorious vanities, but it will be their exclusive rule of action.

Love of country will, in a republic, long be able to restrain within endurable bounds, the gross excesses and insolent exactions of the affluent. The tendency of these, however, instead of diminishing, is daily to increase, until at length too powerful to be operated on by patriotic considerations, opulent selfishness will obtrude its sordid front in unwashed baseness. Devotion to country is then transformed into devotion to self, when the idea of sacrificing personal interest to public prosperity will be denounced as an enthusiastic and canting absurdity.

When a people has become so enervated by the refinements of luxury, and degraded by the debauchery of voluptuous depravity, as to be dead to shame, and defunct in gratitude, which an abandonment of the public interest evidently implies, they will palliate and excuse the dangerous encroachments of arbitrary power ; they will suffer right after right to be tamely surrendered as scarcely worth defending ; they will see the privileges of the many merged in the usurped prerogatives of the few, without a murmur or complaint, and when, at last, morals and manners have become alike corrupt and embroiled, they will not hesitate to tolerate, nor blush to defend a court disgraced by corruption,—polluted by lust,—enervated by every species of emasculating refinement, and stained by every hue of sanguinary crime.

The gaudy pomp and show of wealth has so fired the imagination and conquered the affections, that the people are without difficulty taken in the toils of every glittering scheme, whether it be the suggestion of knavery or the vision of enthusiasm. That steadfastness of mind, simplicity of heart, and rectitude of purpose which so remarkably characterized our ancestors, and which secured them against the encroachments of fraud and the delusions of distempered fancy, have fallen into

desuetude. The stern principles of an uncompromising morality, which they not only respected but scrupulously observed, are looked upon as the stupid errors and vulgar prejudices of an unenlightened age, and he who avows or defends them is considered antiquated and puritanical. The consequence of which is that visions, as wild and impracticable as ever charmed the eye of an enthusiast, are eagerly adopted, and acted upon with as much confidence as if they were demonstrated truths. Nor is this wild and feverish excitement to engage in wild and ruinous speculations, confined to any particular walk of life. We daily see or hear the most alarming proofs of it in the political, commercial, agricultural, and domestic spheres of operation. In government those entrusted with power are seen to engage in the perilous adventures of untried policy; in commerce recourse is had to unfamiliar and rarely successful expedients; in agriculture extravagant speculations, which the sober would not entertain, and which have already led to incredible ruin; and, in domestic life, an excess of extravagance, which prudence and economy if consulted would have resisted, has destroyed the peace and corrupted the principles of thousands.

Have we not reason to apprehend from this intemperate zeal in the pursuit of worldly advantage the most alarming and disastrous consequences. Morals will be deteriorated,—the bonds of society loosened if not torn asunder,—the influence of religion impaired, and the government itself corrupted. Amidst the shock of jarring and conflicting interests—the broils and ferments of contending and rival factions, the retired walks of science and literature will be, if they have not already been, forsaken for the crowded highways of life; those great institutions, in which learning at present scarcely finds a refuge, will be overturned by the levelling spirit of a jealous and infuriated populace, and religion will be degraded to a vulgar trade, the object of which will be to confirm instead of removing the prejudices of the

selfish—to inflame instead of subduing the unruly passions of the sensual.

Have we not already had a bitter foretaste of the determined and desperate spirit which will pervade the land if human conduct is not regulated upon a principle different from that which controls it at present, in the numerous dangerous and fatal encounters that take place with alarming frequency in almost every city in the union; in the horrid murders that come to us from all quarters by every mail; the numerous assassinations with which, within a few years, our country has been disgraced; in the murders and assassinations which have been perpetrated even in our courts of law and halls of legislation; in the destruction of property of every species without adequate cause or provocation: in the violent resistance to the decrees of law, by the banded and infuriated multitude: in the unauthorized and inexcusable intemperance of certain States with the domestic institutions of others: in the infliction of the most cruel, shameful and ignominious punishments on individuals often innocent of the alledged offences, not only without the sanction, but in open defiance of the law: in the frightful and reckless waste of human life, on our waters, which has become too common to excite interest or to provoke a passing remark: in the arson, burglary, highway and street robberies that have been so frequently perpetrated with impunity, as to occasion no surprise, but rather to encourage their repetition: in the vice that openly boasts of its profligacy: in the licentiousness that seeks concealment more for convenience than from a consciousness of guilt; in the numerous domestic broils and feuds, and in the facility and frequency with which connubial engagements are dissolved.

Surely the mind must shrink with terror and amazement, and the heart must sicken with sorrow at the wide spread moral desolation that overshadows the land: at the dark clouds of harm that sit lowering

around our future prospects. When we refer to these ancient governments that flourished in all the strength of reason and intelligence—that swayed in all the majesty of undisputed power the destinies of empire—that shed forth the brilliant and unsullied lustre of noon tide splendor—and that flung far into the distant future the light and blaze of their glory and example, we find that so long as the people resisted the gross allurements of sense; so long as the heart was not sullied by the guilt of sensuality; so long as the public administration was not debauched by the refinements of depravity, so long no serious accident endangered—no reverse compromised—no disaster overthrew public prosperity or private happiness. But whenever a people sinks into an effeminate luxury, and the love of money prevents the benevolent feelings from sweetly dilating themselves; whenever profligacy enkindles the dissolute affections; whenever vice exposes manners to the blighting influence of corrupt associations; and whenever the government, instead of feeling a generous concern for, endeavors by faithlessness, prodigality, or profligacy to heighten and exasperate the miseries of mankind, civil liberty has ceased to shed its blessings and national power to exert its usual sway. In the decline and final overthrow of all those governments, which ceased to be restrained by virtue and guided by wisdom, do we not see prefigured the decay of our beloved institutions—the decline of our social prosperity—the irredeemable forfeiture of our political independence, and the demon of discord and violence shaking to pieces all that was cemented by the purest blood of patriotism, and sweeping a land whose deeds must live in immortal remembrance with the besom of indiscriminate disaster.

The ascendancy which pecuniary importance has obtained over the minds of men operates unfavorably to high efforts of genius, by the insignificance to which it necessarily reduces those who cultivate letters. In no

other country in the world are native men of letters treated with so little consideration or respect as they are in the ordinary intercourse of society in the United States. The "millionaire" not only gives tone to society, though he may have studied delicacy of sentiment, and elegance of manners at the butcher's block, and have been trained to a nice sense of pride, and to a true and noble sort of honor in the hostry, but takes the unwarrantable liberty of treating the most intellectual and accomplished men in the country with the arrogant insolence of familiarity, and the ostentatious pride of condescension. Such degradation of the dignity of genius goes far to deprive society of that charm which men of cultivated minds would throw around it, and to tarnish that lustre which literature would shed upon it.

Successful bankers, brokers and tradesmen have obtained complete ascendancy in the estimation of the public. By the force of money they have awed men into an unconditional subserviency to their purposes that could scarcely be looked for in the passive slave or the enlisted soldier. In every sphere of life, from the most honorable to the most exalted, and in every profession, from the most unhallowed to the most holy, we see a truckling to the money changers, the most disgraceful to the dignity of human nature, and the most degrading to the pride of the human understanding. Though as awkward as if born with two left hands, and as blunt as if parading the stables of Tastersals, they command in the saloon an homage that would flatter the vanity of a Corinthian of the first water amongst the most fashionable. Such men, and they constitute the greater part of the male portion of what is called "good society," having contracted habits of thought, and of feeling that exclude them from all intimate communion with those whose pursuits have been conducted in the elegant retirement of literary and philosophical leisure, and being incapable of appreciating, or even of understanding

them, it is not surprising that they do not place a high value on their labors, or that they rather tolerate than desire or court their society.

Such men are the blight and mildew of our social system. Under their administration, society loses its life and elasticity; all that elegant ease and vivacity of manner so characteristic of, and which casts such a seductive brilliancy around the best European society. They carry into the social circle those topics of vulgar conversation which engage the thoughts,—constitute the subjects of discussion and competition in the busy places of men, and on the highways of life. There your ears are constantly stunned by the busy din of the Rialto, the Bourse, and the Exchange. Of the language of polished society they are, generally speaking, as ignorant as they are of the language of the inhabitants of Georgium Sidus. They forget, but I beg pardon, they never heard, that the social circle is common ground, on which all men meet on a footing of common equality, and where it is expected that the lawyer will come without his brief, the merchant without his ledger, the farmer without his spade, and the physician without his drugs. People should unite in society for the purpose of cultivating learning and good feeling; cooling the ardor of party excitement; soothing the rival spirit that rages with too much violence amongst the members of the same profession; obliterating the coldness and indifference which is apt to grow up between men who are in pursuit of different and opposing interests; removing the barriers to social intercourse which exclusive habits are almost certain to erect; and rubbing off the asperities of life, that society may be reduced to an even and polished surface.

How are these objects to be accomplished? How are we to draw off attention from those sordid and vulgar cares, low and grovelling interests, enervating pleasures and degrading intrigues which business men obtrude into private society? By giving intellect that as-

cendancy to which it is entitled ; by encouraging a taste for refined, elegant and scientific pursuits ; by purifying manners ; by softening, refining and elevating the affections, and by rendering it more fashionable to have minds well stored with knowledge than purses well lined with gold.

But our hopes on this subject are not very sanguine. The deep rooted passion for ostentatious display cannot be easily eradicated. Those who have the ascendancy will, if possible, retain it, for power like the dagger of Macbeth, invites the willing imagination to grasp it, although it may be as unworthy to wield it. Unfortunate is the present organization of society, and difficult and dangerous will be the task of him who attempts its reformation. Upon a better footing, however, it must be placed, before literature, enlivened by the vivid flashes of a sportive fancy and steadied in its course of progressive improvement, by the sound admonitions of enlightened reason, will be able to impart to it an exemplary and unblemished character, or to shed such glory on the country as will dazzle and delight the wondering eye. The degraded state to which men of letters are reduced in the social circle, and which almost amounts to an exclusion of them from it, operates as an insuperable barrier to rapid literary advancement. They feel that they are insulated beings, awakening neither the interest, the sympathy, nor the admiration of the mass of gross mortality in the midst of which they merely vegetate. This being the case, it is not surprising that but few should attempt to force their way to permanent renown by the exclusive cultivation of letters, or that many of those who engage in the enterprise, should cease to be bewildered by their fascinations, after humiliating experience has convinced them, as it certainly will, that the highest intellectual excellence will bring but little honor, glory or emolument. The brief history of American literature already furnishes many facts which prove that a number of those who had been smit-

ten with the ardent love of classical and ancient lore, and who blazed with the fire of true genius, relinquished pursuits of philosophy and literature long before the mind had even reached its meridian splendor; before the taste had been matured and refined by exercise, and before any noble or enduring monument had been erected in the commonwealth of letters, and that too, for some more profitable and palpable, though less rational and dignified means of personal advancement. So numerous are the ways of pecuniary aggrandizement, and so seducing are the temptations with which wealth has been invested, by a laxity of morals, and a mean servility of manners, that he who is superior to the former, or has firmness enough to resist the allurements of the latter, must feel the fire of genius glow within him with uncommon ardor. Few have the courage to pine in hopeless beggary on the very summit of Parnassus, while thousands who never felt a noble impulse, or expressed a generous sentiment are wallowing in wealth in the vale below.

Having already adverted at considerable length to the various ways in which avarice injuriously affects literature, we would close the consideration of this part of our subject, by propounding a question to which we trust those whose hearts have been polluted by its debasing lust, may be able to return a more consoling and satisfactory answer than has occurred to us. The be-nighting influence of the reigning passion is confessed on all hands—it is seen in every action, and is illustrated in every enterprise, from the most trivial to the most important—but what, I would inquire, do those who are in the practice of the unholy and debasing idolatry propose to accomplish by the unwieldy fortunes which many of them succeed in amassing? Is it that they may retire, after having expended the years of mature manhood, in the perturbing enterprises of business, “otium cum dignitate?” The expectation is as unreasonable as it is evidently unrealizable. To ingraft the refine-

ments of retired, tranquil enjoyment, upon the active and engrossing habits of pecuniary accumulation, is utterly impracticable. Or do they hope, that having had to submit in their own persons to the inconvenience of labor and the coarse privations of poverty, to be enabled to place their children above the necessity of the former and the humiliation of the latter? Such objects would be aimed at by gross undisciplined minds only, and they are often the most remote from them, when they fancy themselves to be most closely in their proximity. The lazy and luxurious votaries of sensual pleasure, may, in early life, revel in the delights of opulent ease until they often become, even before age has shed its sterile scars upon their brows, the signalized illustrations of succorless poverty, and of redemptionless pollution. Or, finally, do they look to enjoy the proud satisfaction of seeing their sons in possession of the honors and dignities of the government. So far as money is adequate to the accomplishment of their hopes the wildest fancies may be gratified. They forget, however, if they ever knew, that a knowledge of the science of government and legislation, together with the sciences of political economy and jurisprudence are not to be learned by those whose youth is spent in idleness and dissipation. If, therefore, ever mastered, it will be, only by minds that have been trained to investigation by strict discipline, and thoroughly imbued with profound elementary knowledge, submitting their faculties to the assiduous toil of years. That the sons of the opulent will not bring minds to their study strengthened and sharpened by previous cultivation, is evident to all those who have watched their career through college. They are reared up under auspices the most unpropitious to habits of close application, and, as a natural consequence, to the acquisition of that knowledge which is so indispensable, and the developement of those qualities which are so important a preparation to the proper government of men. Commanding without exertion, all the comforts

and elegancies of affluence, it would be demanding of them more than human nature is able to perform, to expect that they should submit to a severe course of moral and intellectual discipline. It would be to expect that an African slave should labor for his master like a Roman soldier for victory and empire; it would be to look in a pampered eastern despot, whose every want has been gratified, and every pleasure flattered, for the beauty and courage, the swiftness and strength, of Achilles. The sons of opulence, like the lilies, "they toil not, neither do they spin," but, verily, they are not arrayed like Solomon in all his glory. An unfruitful and unprincipled manhood, succeeds in most cases, to an idle and crapulous youth, and how, from such a seed-time should a harvest be expected of legislative or any other kind of wisdom ?

Those who have been nursed in the enervating arms of luxurious indulgence, will necessarily be trained to habits of acting and of thinking, which are sure to entail on them an ignorance which instruction cannot enlighten, a profligacy which morality cannot reform, and a latitudinarianism which religion will not be able to convert. In the intercourse of social refinement they will prove as incapable of enjoying their ancestral affluence, as they will be to restrain the transports of passion, or to repress the violent ebullitions of gross insolence or brutal severity. Having lived with the associates of Cataline, they often become proficient debauchees, but never sages. Though they may have enjoyed every opportunity of education, and have been stimulated by every incentive of example, they will rarely gratify the cherished hopes of an indulgent father, or realize the irrepressible aspirations of a fond and ambitious mother, who, too often, has occasion in the union of a fortunate daughter to the brilliant destiny of an accomplished and able man, to exclaim with Cornelia, "How long shall I be known as the mother-in-law of Scipio, and not as the mother of the Gracchi ?" with-

out the assurance which Tiberius and Caius gave her that the period was not distant.

Who are the men that have figured on the political stage of this great confederacy? The offspring of affluence and the nurslings of elegance and ease? No—most assuredly? The men who have shone with lustre bright and unsullied, sprang from an origin the most unenviable, and from parents the most pennyless; men who, pressed by want, forced their way over every obstacle—subdued every disadvantage, and raised themselves to the highest stations of distinction and emolument, while those unacquainted with the pangs of poverty, and unaccustomed to the sneer of contempt, were crawling along the cool, ignoble vale of private life, bending the supple hinges of the knee to those with whom they scorned association in the halcyon days of boyhood.

Those countries in which literature has flourished to the highest perfection, were remarkable for the distinguished respect which was paid those who cultivated it. Instead of treating them with that cold and repulsive indifference which, in the United States, congeals thought and extinguishes the fire of genius, they received such honors as are the best calculated to stimulate them to exertion, and to render them impatient of inglorious rest. Both Greece and Rome owe all their celebrity to the homage which they paid to intellectual superiority. Throughout all those countries in Europe in which literature flourishes, men of letters are respected and honored. In England, in particular, talents are appreciated, attainments are admired. Enter Westminster Abbey, that ancient pile, rendered venerable by the lapse of more than a dozen centuries, and you will not see the tombs of Beings, but monuments which the enlightened gratitude of a noble nation has erected to the fame of those illustrious men who have covered her with glory, as was to have been seen of yore, those of the Sophocles' and Plato's of Athens. Well am I con-

vinced that the sight of such enduring tokens of regard for men of genius have enkindled the undying flame of ambition in many a heart, and have caused the remains of more than one man of sublime mental energies to be deposited in consecrated ground that would otherwise have died, in all probability, unnoticed and unsung. Seeing, then, the wide^{er} difference there is between Great Britain and the United States in regard to the honor that is paid to celebrated men of letters, should we be surprised that those few distinguished individuals, who have redeemed us from scorn in the estimation of Europe, should fly from the contaminating contact of those vulgar prejudices which degrade them at home, not only to indulge communion with congenial spirits, but to take that station in society to which they are entitled, and which they know a liberal and enlightened people will not deny them. Franklin is much more indebted for the brilliant fame he enjoys with posterity, to the undivided applause of Europe, than to the eulogistic notices which his countrymen have taken of him. Even Washington, who should live in the affections of every heart, has had the charm of a most attractive brilliancy thrown around his name by some of the most eloquent orators and splendid poets of England. Hear what Franklin said to him in one of his letters in 1780:—

“ Should peace arrive, after another campaign or two, and afford us a little leisure, I should be happy to see your Excellency in Europe, and to accompany you, if my age and strength would permit, in visiting some of its most ancient and famous kingdoms. You would, on this side the sea, enjoy the great reputation you have acquired, pure and free from those little slanders that the jealousy and envy of a man’s countrymen and contemporaries are ever endeavoring to cast over living merit. Here you would know and enjoy what posterity would say of Washington; for a thousand leagues have nearly the same effect as a thousand years. The feeble voice of those grovelling passions cannot extend so far

either in time or distance." For what does Irving stand indebted to his countrymen? For their stupid neglect and opprobrium in the first place, and afterwards for the senseless repetition of praises, which had been covered by the frost of many English winters. Such conduct must be regarded not only as insolent, but insulting. When our newspaper critics hailed his triumphs with acclamation, after Byron had pronounced him as an English classic, second only to Scott, it reminded us of the impudence of Horace Walpole, who pretended to discover that Johnson had sense. Why should Cooper feel grateful to the American public? The lustre of his genius, in its first bright dawning, dazzled not the vulgar, nor pleased the judicious eye. But, after England had stamped his *Spy* with the seal of public and palpable approval, he was considered a writer of distinguished ability. Now, however, because he has too much independence, and too sacred a regard for truth, to flatter the insatiable vanity of his countrymen, he is set down as a dolt and a driveller. Their stupid second-hand praise, or their malicious disparagement, will not add to, nor subtract from his permanent reputation. Posterity, far removed from the sphere of personal feeling, and personal influence, will do him justice.

The state of the book-trade in the United States is unpropitious to the exertion of native talent, and, consequently to the developement of a high literature. Editions of new English books issue from the American press in regular uninterrupted succession. Scarcely a day passes by, without the table of the scholar being graced by a copy of some work, the production of foreign genius. To many of these, superiority has been enfeoffed, and for the American mind, under its peculiar and oppressive disadvantages, to expect successfully to compete with them would be scarcely less frantic than hopeless. They generally come from men of great intellectual capacity, of deep learning, of pure and refined

taste, who have, for many years, breathed a purely literary atmosphere, and have lived in the midst of circumstances the best calculated to give great quickness, accuracy and delicacy in all matters of intellectual taste. To equal them would be flattering to the pride of the most exalted amongst us, but to surpass them at present would be impossible.

The republication in the United States of such works as we have just referred to, costs the book-seller nothing more than the paper and press work, the consequence of which is, that unless the American author can afford to write gratuitously, those engaged in the book trade will wage against him ungenerous and oppressive hostility. No matter what may be the merit of his production—no matter though he brandish the Olympic thunder of Homer, and crowd his pages with those sublime conceptions that fill and astonish the mind, he will not float gracefully and buoyantly on the tide of popular favor, unless some influential publisher condescends to take him under his patronage. To obtain this indispensable advantage, an author must gratuitously tender his lucubrations, or sell the copy-right for a trifle.

Extensive as is his agency in the cruel oppression under which native talent groans, it should not be ascribed exclusively to the publisher of books. The public not only connives at their proscription of domestic talent, but is led, both by inclination and interest, to encourage and perpetuate it. Works of British production are reprinted in the United States without a single stiver going into the pockets of their authors; consequently they are furnished to the public at a much cheaper rate, and the publisher receives a much more satisfactory profit, than if native literature were encouraged, and native genius rewarded.

By encouragement of native learning, however, we do not mean the publication and approval of every attempt at literature that may happen to have the singular bad fortune to be of American origin. Authors are

numerous, and many of them fill their volumes with such a tawdy and ridiculous parade of swaggering nonsense, that they deserve more to share the fate of poor Cinna, the poet, who was killed by Mark Anthony's mob, for making bad verses, than they do to be graciously entrenched in the estimation of the public as men of letters. We too frequently find the phrase "encouragement of native literature" confounded with the indiscriminate praise of every performance, without regard to peculiar and individual merits, which the ignorance or cupidity of authors may think fit to palm upon the public. Than this, no more effeteal means could be adopted to repress the exulting pride of conscious talents, or to cause the paradoxical ravings of weird and mystic theorizing to be confounded with that pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language which place an author high in the ranks of literature. When works of every grade of merit are amalgamated in the melting furnace of overheated patriotism, real genius becomes disgusted and disheartened, and no longer finds an inexhaustible fund of delight in the calm retirement of undisipated and philosophical leisure. Such conduct would argue either a want of sagacity to discriminate peculiar claims to admiration, or the existence of an unauthorized and imbecile lenity towards lucubrations as insane as the ravings of Robelais, unredeemed from utter scorn by his wit or humor, which must sink literature into complete contempt. It is not the number or variety of literary productions, but their excellency, which is to shed light on learning, and glory on the country. Like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, we should regard more the strength than the number of our literati.

In the United States a taste for literature is less indulged as a passion, than cultivated as a profession. It is not, therefore, an elevated or an elegant employment, but a pursuit in dignity and importance no higher than the mere vulgar trades and professions. Viewed in this light, the fire which ambition kindles upon its altars is

evidently the same as that which burns upon the alter of Mammon, and the priests who minister at it delight in that gross homage which is paid to themselves, and look not for that pure and unsullied glory which a grateful posterity has never failed to award to the eternal forms of truth and beauty, as they are reflected in the mind of true genius.

He who is prompted to the study of literature, by the consideration that it may enable him to advance more speedily and directly his personal interest, will never hesitate to use such means as are best calculated to compass the object in view. The sentiments of such an individual will never be more elevated than the moral principles by which his conduct is regulated, nor will the flights of his genius be higher than the mark at which he aims. He who places happiness in ignoble and sensual gratifications, and is always eagerly grasping at the phantom pleasure, will never be able to make much progress in science or literature. He who suffers himself to be bewildered by the plaudits of the uneducated crowd, or dazzled by the ostentatious pageantry of pecuniary power, will never feel burning within him those fierce and unquenchable fires that blaze throughout eternity. He who feels his cheek blushing for his poverty, when he beholds the senseless displays of unwieldy magnificence, will with extreme reluctance dedicate himself to those pursuits which enforce, extend, and refine the maxims of prudence,—which illustrate, bind, and enliven the precepts of morality,—and which humanize, dignify and exalt the soul. He who would exchange the glory of intellectual and literary superiority for the wealth of Crœsus, the fame of Alexander, or the power of Napoleon, will never scale the giddy heights of Parnassus, will never by the resistless and overbearing strength of his talents, force his way to everlasting renown.

Individuals who could be thus easily seduced from their allegiance to the most ennobling of pursuits, will

never willingly expose themselves to the neglect and contempt, with which the stupid and sordid delight to oppress them ; to the turpitude and treachery of professing friends ; to the malicious insinuations of pusillanimous foes ; to the insolent sneer and feigned contempt of awakened envy ; to the vindictive paroxysms of exasperated vanity, or the deep and deadly vengeance of irritated pride.

Multitudes there are in every country, but they abound to an incredible extent in the United States, who write not for posterity. Their highest aim is to win, if possible, an ephemeral popularity, that their greedy desires for emolument may be gratified. The abject and cringing slaves of public opinion,—the fomenters and flatterers of popular vices, they tamely follow instead of attempting to lead ; they palliate and excuse, instead of reprobating and reforming derelictions of duty ; they lay grovelling and prostrate at the footstool of power, and offer incense to ermined villainy, instead of strangling it in the unrelenting grasp of fierce and deadly denunciation.

Under the auspices of such writers, it is impossible for literature ever to assume a stable or a commanding character. It will vary with every revolving era, and in every new turn that it takes, we shall be greeted by the same overwhelming association of repugnance, prejudice and disgust ; in every fresh aspect that it exhibits we shall be shocked by the same bold defying libertanism, and in every new form that it assumes, we shall be dinned by all the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation paying obsequious court at pride's unhallowed shrine. By such writers, nature is always treated like the magazine of a magic lantern, in which beings the most beautiful or grotesque, angels or demons, fairy forms or hideous contortions, are equally admissible, provided they make the spectator stare and awaken the curiosity of the public. Under their guidance, poetry will corrupt, instead of purifying morals—it will

nervate, instead of invigorating the faculties of thought —it will vitiate, instead of ameliorating the affections of the heart. History, instead of being a faithful and unassailable record of truth, will be a disgusting repository of flattery and falsehood, of disreputable and revolting absurdities. Eloquence, instead of throwing an impregnable safeguard around liberty and law, will, with its persuasive ardor and treacherous embellishments, betray them both into the hands of their most implacable foes. Satire, instead of exhibiting vice in all its loathsome deformity, will be employed to caricature virtue. The legitimate objects of literature will be lost sight of, and the responsibilities of genius will be forgotten, by authors who rush with the ardor of an Olympic struggle after present popularity, and pecuniary profit.

The authors of such a literature have no idea of true fame. They confound it with popularity, with the idle buzz of fashion, and with the flattery of favor or friendship. This is not only a limited view of authorship, but it tends directly to the production of an inferior and a frivolous literature. Popularity cannot be displeasing to the pride of real genius, but it never exerts such sway over it as to inflate with vanity or presumption the mind of an author duly impressed with a sense of his obligations to posterity. He knows well that the irrestrainable loquacity of common reviewers is no more like the voice of true fame, than the smouldering fire which the peasant piles upon his hearth is like the steady blaze of the vertical sun. He knows that the vulgar acclimations of the multitude may give notoriety, but that they never can confer real honor or permanent renown. He needs not the conviction that the intellectual glimmer of false lights may dazzle the uneducated, but will never please the judicious eye, and that, although pomp of style, parade of erudition, eccentricity of thought and fervid bursts of passion, may captivate the crowd, it requires literary attainments, both splen-

did and solid, to command the admiration of the accomplished scholar.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PHILOMATHLEAN SOCIETY :

Would you cultivate literature with success,—would you attain the heights of moral and intellectual excellence, and have your name ennobled by unwithering renown ? If so, you must not be nursed to it by any vain hope of personal aggrandizement,—by any splendid anticipations of worldly grandeur, but by a pure, an undefiled and an inextinguishable love of it for itself. You must pursue it as a passion, that lives and breathes in every thought word and action, and not as a profession that may be relinquished at will. You must dwell with tongueless transport on the original forms of beauty and sublimity, as they arise in your minds, and your eyes must beam with unearthly joy as you reveal truth after truth in the great chain of moral and physical events. You must give to literature the fervent and sublime devotion of the wilderness, the closet, and the cell. You must not court the versatile applause of the thoughtless, giddy, and inconsistent multitude, but stretch your hopes far beyond a procinctive futury, and wait calmly and patiently for the award of a just and impartial posterity. You must pass over the present, and expect to live in the memory of ages yet unborn. It is the admiration of nations yet unrecorded in the book of time, that you should desire, and by which you should be inspired ; for the brightest living reputation cannot be so imposing to the imagination as that which is covered by the hoar, and rendered venerable by the roll of innumerable ages. Fame's proud temple stands upon the tomb, and he who would have a foretaste of immortality while a pilgrim on earth, will have no more chance of winning a place in it, than the fiends have of gaining paradise. You must, like Gallileo delineate in despite of the infuriate bigotry and irreclaimable stupidity of inquisitors, the motions of our planet on the walls of a

dungeon ; like Dante, though wandering in hopeless exile,—his life an uninterrupted series of misfortunes, and complaining bitterly of having to ascend the stairs of other men's labor, with unabated zeal for immortality ; like Cervantes, sinking under the infirmities of age, and groaning in anguish under the torture of famishing penury, irradiate the damps of imprisonment, and extract from midnight glooms and impervious darkness, perceptions more lovely and inspiring than noontide splendor ; like Tasso, cruelly suffering in the solitude and despondency of a mad-house, celebrate the beauty and death of a Clarinda, and the love and flight of an Ermina ; like Camoeus, after disastrous shipwreck, buffet the waves with one hand, and with the other hold triumphantly above the roaring surge the manuscript of the Luciad, which was dearer to him than life ; and like Milton, who, when earth's unstable glories had faded away, cast his mental vision on Heaven's extended landscape, where, revelling among the spangled splendors of the firmament, or, sporting through the unresisted void of space, where thunders roar,—blazing torrents stream,—tempestuous whirlwinds burst, and storms pour their rage, he beheld all the strife, heard all the wild uproar of conflicting devils and angels, and followed in all its convulsive heavings, the desperate and sublime ambition of him who thundered against the battlements of heaven.

Such is the spirit that should prompt, and such the ardor that will inspire those of you that have a real passion for literature. It is to such sacrifices as those to which we have just referred, that we are indebted for all those “fancies chaste and noble,” that have soothed the senses and delighted the fancy ; elevated, expanded and electrified the throbbing heart ; sweetened and embellished the social circle ; shed a soft, undazzling lustre over the refined joys of retirement ; and gilded human life with a brilliant and inexhaustible variety of charms and graces ; that have asserted the rights of in-

tellectual freedom; sublimated reason to the highest pitch of refinement; dismantled the arrogance, impertinence, and insolence of despotic power of all its vain and delusive splendor; poured a flood of holy grandeur over the pure and uncontaminated precepts of the Christian faith, and made the world rich in all the fulness of superabundant bliss.

Let me cherish the fond and pleasing hope that the ALUMNI of the University of Indiana, but the members of the Philomathean Society in particular, will arise in the dignity and strength of genius and intelligence, and, by a just, solid, forcible, and an original style of writing, give birth to such an era of intellectual glory as will not only gladden and invigorate the languishing powers of thought, but obliterate from the mind the comfortless and mortifying reflection that we have not a national literature. Let me believe that, soaring in the unclouded majesty of reason, you will, by all that is rich and brilliant in thought, and exhaustless in the creative energy of fancy, rouse the nation from the withering lethargy in which it slumbers, and save future generations from the torture and disgrace of eternal self-condemnation. Let me, however, remind you, that in the career you are to run, and which the prophetic eye of experience has laid open to you, distinction is only to be reached by two sorts of beings—reptiles and eagles. You must succeed either by the unblushing servility of your flattery, or by your bold, uncompromising probity. There is no middle course--no "just medium" between truth and falsehood, and let me hope that like the gnarled and knotted oak, which knows its strength, and haughtily defies the fury of the angry storm, you will plant yourselves firmly on the ground of everlasting and unshakable truth, and prove yourselves as uncompliant to the solicitations of vice, as rugged to the tempests of faction.

Would you rise in the awfulness of grandeur, and shine with the splendor of elegance like the sun in

the zenith of his glory, you must not be dazzled by the trappings and embellishments of wealth, nor blush to acknowledge honorable poverty, which in the days of ancient virtue was the glory of Fabricus. Let not the love of money chill the generous impulses of youth,—contract the feelings of the heart, nor impoverish the powers of the mind. Bow not down in crouching sycophancy, and in the anguish of conscious meanness, the stupendous strength of genius, to swell the arrogance and to defend and palliate the bloated insolence of monied aristocrats, who, in feeling, intellect, and action are no better than pedlars. But by the force and greatness of your talents, the steady rectitude of your public principles, the unstained purity of your private manners, and the spirit of firm and uncompromising hostility to the dull and tasteless entertainments of dissipated society, humble the self-complacent pride of monied corpulence and rebuke the arrogant impertinence of the unlearned and unlettered rich. Expose to the blighting influence of that speaking energy which passion mirrors for the self-sufficiency of the Jack-in-office. Never wheel or veer to accommodate yourselves to the political trade winds, but, like the grampus, which, though assailed and buffeted by the roaring waves and rolling surges, keep on an undeviating course. Strengthen not the ferocious and impure hand of fanaticism, and suffer not holy tyranny to hold a reverend place in public estimation, but breathe into the ear of virtuous despondency the faith and hope of heavenly inspiration. Color not the designs of mischief by the fair appearance of truth and candor, but dissolve and disperse the confederacy of deists who lurk in ambush to surprise and devour the unhappy wanderer. Strike with Cyclopean force the open and avowed atheist—awaken him from the philosophic dreams of infidelity, and urge him, if possible, to emulate the zeal, the piety, and simplicity of former times. Preserve your minds untainted by the poison of prejudice, unclouded by the turbulence of passion, un-

enslaved by the despotism of party, and your independence as unsullied by the slightest imputation as the soarings of the eagle are free and unfettered on her purple hills. In all you do let it be from an impulse as upright as if acting in the reverend presence of canonized forefathers, and what you say let it be so chaste as not to offend ears the most morally attuned, and so pure that unshocked the priest may hear it. In a word, be as fully prepared for every occasion that may require it, to submit your actions and motives to the ordeal of strict examination, as if you knew you would have to vindicate them in days as undefiled as those of Aristides, and before a tribunal as rigid and exacting as that of Areopagus. Do this, and no patriots in the country will command more respect; no literatists in the republic will shine with a purer lustre, and no saints in Heaven will inspire truer reverence.

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